University of Alberta

ALETHIC ACTUALISM:
A Quasi-Realist Theory of Truth and Knowledge

by

Murat Baç ©

A thesis submitted to the faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Philosophy

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Philosophy would render us entirely *Pyrrhonian*, were not nature too strong for it.

David Hume

I do not know whether there is Truth or not. But I instinctively feel that I cannot be without It. And I know that if It is, then It is everything for me: reason, and good, and strength, and life, and happiness. Perhaps It is not; but I love It.

Pavel Florensky

No matter how dark the time, we shall no longer turn to philosophers for rescue as our ancestors turned to the priests. We shall turn instead to the poets and the engineers . . . .

Richard Rorty

Philosophy cannot take refuge in reduced ambitions. It is after . . . truth, even though we know that is not what we are going to get.

Thomas Nagel

MARTHA: Mr. Hathorne, I am innocent to a witch, I know not what a witch is.

HATHORNE: (*Playing to the* AUDIENCE) If ye know not what a witch is, how do you know you are not one?

Arthur Miller, from *The Crucible*

for E L K

ABSTRACT

This thesis offers a theory of actual human cognizers' epistemic connection to truth of their beliefs or statements. It comprises four major parts. First, I develop a quasi-realist metaphysic which differs, in fundamental ways, from the customary realist *and* anti-realist ontologies. Second, I produce an account of nonepistemic truth and truth-making relation according to which there is an irreducible logical gap between the concepts of propositional truth and evidential support. Although such a characterization places me in the same camp with the realists regarding the independence of the notion of propositional truth from that of evidence, I endorse anti-realism with respect to the medium or "world" in/through which truths are made. Third, I question the ubiquitous supposition that nonepistemic truth is a necessary condition of propositional knowledge, concluding that it is not as sound as it first seems. Finally, I employ the ideas that have been developed in the preceding chapters in order to answer the question of the possibility and nature of higher-level empirical knowledge. The resultant account is a linguistic Kantian theory of *actual*—as opposed to misleadingly idealized—human agents' *alethic* world, and, in this sense, it shares the gist of Immanuel Kant's epistemic-ontological perspective: we do have reliable and objective knowledge of the world around us; but this certainly does not mean that such knowledge comes without substantial limits.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE (Introduction)

1.1. "Love of Language" in Lieu of "Phil-o-sophia" 1

1.2. An Explanation About the Problem and Analysis 3

1.3. Realism(s) in Epistemology 9

1.4. The Plan 13

CHAPTER TWO (Factualism: An Ontological Basis)

2.1. The Tractarian Heritage 20

2.2. The Need for Facts 22

2.3. Armstrong's World of States of Affairs 23

2.4. Truth-Making at the Basic Level and the Relation of Supervenience 29

2.5. First-Class and Second-Class Truth-Makers 31

2.6. Truth-Making According to a Metaphysician 35

CHAPTER THREE (Metaphysical Realism)

3.1. Tractarian Factualism As a Form of Realism 39

3.2. Putnam's Internal Realism 42

3.3. Lynch's Pluralistic Realism 50

3.4. An Objection to TR 52

3.5. A Question Concerning Armstrong's First and Second Class Entities 57

3.6. Anti-Realism and the Question of the "Ding An Sich" 61

3.7. A Sanguine Attempt at Reconciliation 70

3.8. Concluding Remarks 72

CHAPTER FOUR (The Davidsonian Challenge)

4.1. Quine and Epistemology 75

4.2. The Quinean Holism, Tarskian Schema, and Davidson 79

4.3. Davidson on Truth-Making 84

4.4. Davidson and Realism 86

CHAPTER FIVE (In Defense of Scheme-Based Semantics)

5.1. Davidson and Language 92

5.2. The Very Idea of Conceptual Scheme 94

5.3. Verificationism, Quasi-Behaviorism, and the Problem of Institutional Facts 99

5.4. Why did Experimental Psychologists Abandon Behaviorism? 106

5.5. Concluding Remarks: Back to the Ghosts and the Machine? 113

CHAPTER SIX (Alethic Realism)

6.1. Non-epistemic Truth 119

6.2. Is Truth Independent of Us? 128

6.3. Situations and Frameworks 130

6.4. Coherence versus Correspondence 137

6.5. Concluding Remarks 140

CHAPTER SEVEN (Epistemic Realism)

7.1. Can Truth Be a Condition of Propositional Knowledge? 143

7.2. McDowell and Close Encounters of the Veridical Kind 149

7.3. The Concept of "Epistemic Gradient" in Doxastic Webs 153

CHAPTER EIGHT (Metaknowledge)

8.1. The KK-Thesis: Affirmations and Denials 160
8.2. Going Beyond Extensional Equivalence 165
8.3. Strong and Weak Realism About Metaknowledge 170
8.4. The Meaning of Metaknowledge 178
8.5. Knowing "Modestly" That One Knows 182

CHAPTER NINE (On Defeaters)

9.1. The Fourth Condition 188
9.2. Pollock and Ultimate Undefeasibility 190
9.3. Against Externalism 193
9.4. Concluding Remarks and a Tentative Proposal 197

CHAPTER TEN (Conclusion)

10.1. Why Alethic Actualism? 200
10.2. Definitions and Explications 201
10.3. The Idea of Nonepistemic Truth-Making 208
10.4. Why Retain the Realist Truth? 210
10.5. In Defense of "AR cum *anti-ER"* 212
10.6. Concluding Remarks on Alethic Actualism 216

BIBLIOGRAPHY 219

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

1.1. "Love of Language" in Lieu of "Phil-o-sophia"

Philosophy has undergone a spectacular and perplexing transformation during the past century. Western philosophy is known to have emerged nearly 2500 years ago mainly as an attempt to discover and understand essence(s). As such, "lovers of wisdom" sought to unravel the mysteries behind *phainomenon*, to find absolute answers to the ultimate questions of man. The overwhelming majority of traditional philosophers (say, of the Ancient Greek or the Enlightenment period) would probably be astonished to see how remarkably "less ambitious" their field of study has become in the twentieth century. Broadly speaking, there have been two axes of this interesting recent development: first, (traditional) philosophy was challenged to defend itself against the charges that it, unlike natural sciences, could not pose "cognitively significant" questions and answer any of them. The most radical opponents of philosophy have boldly claimed that there is nothing left for the philosophers to accomplish in today's world and, thus, they must be replaced with psychologists, engineers, or poets. Second, numerous thinkers have attacked especially the once-alleged sovereignty of a particular kind of *Reason* stripped of "subjective" elements. They maintained that such a delusively idealized Reason purported by the philosophers to guide "rational" thinking actually never existed and, more importantly, that the claim to *Truth*—which was supposed to be obtained via exercise of the "correct" Reason—tended to suppress other forms of thought. This sort of anti-absolutist approach constituted an essential linchpin of post-modernism. More specifically, the thinkers of the post-modern era endeavored to display the impossibility of a neutral, impartial, and ahistorical philosophical standpoint. One natural upshot of this development is that universality and normativity which are typically associated with (traditional) philosophical enterprise have become highly suspect. Since the classical conceptions of Truth, Knowledge, and Rationality are now argued to have become totally obsolete, contemporary philosophy in general, and epistemology in particular, seem to face a crisis of identity. Of course, different philosophers in the past century drew different conclusions from this alleged predicament. Most notably, some influential thinkers persistently argued that philosophers should give up the idea that the notions like propositional truth and fields such as analytic epistemology are greatly enlightening or useful ones.

The study whose main contours will be drawn in this chapter is intended to be along the lines of *traditional* epistemology despite the fact that it recognizes the underlying motivation behind the arguments of the "linguistic turn" represented most prominently by L. Wittgenstein and his followers. In a nutshell, it will concern itself with the concepts of (propositional) truth, (propositional) knowledge, and how they are related to one another in the actual epistemic practices of human cognizers. Hence, the fundamental assumptions of this project is, first, that these concepts *are* legitimate objects of theoretical scrutiny and, second, that the *philosopher* can have something interesting to say about them. One corollary of these assumptions is that "naturalization" (in fields like analytic epistemology or philosophy of science) must have its limits. It is my conviction that while philosophy ought to maintain a substantial relationship with the empirical sciences, its role as the provider of an *Übersicht* over the findings and methods of empirical sciences is a significant one and that without such a critical bird's-eye view scientists can and do make serious mistakes in theory construction.[1] Therefore, an underlying and motivating idea of my project is that despite various transformations in its landscape (the older buildings collapse to ground and the new ones get erected) and changes of attitude (the inhabitants of Philosopville gradually learn to be more modest in their claims), we can reasonably assume that the engagement formerly known as love-of-wisdom has not yet shared the sad fate of Nietzsche's God and will most likely be with us in the foreseeable future.

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[1] I have discussed one such case related to experimental psychology in my 1996.

Yet, the contemporary reaction to Epistemology is not one that can lightheartedly be shrugged off. It is no more the case that the claims like "truth is interesting enough to deserve some theoretical attention" and "we must listen to what the philosopher has to say on such matters as truth and knowledge" are reckoned as truisms among philosophical circles: some thinkers have, as I have briefly mentioned above, adamantly refused to embrace those seemingly innocuous assumptions. As would happen dialectically in almost any philosophical debate, epistemologists (in the customary sense of the term) attempted in turn to defend the plausibility and viability of their theoretical enterprise by pointing to certain shortcomings of the most central arguments of the anti-epistemology (and/or "anti-truth") camp. The project to be developed here aims at making a contribution to the pertinent literature by offering a theory of empirical knowledge suggesting, among other things, that the above-mentioned "anti" camp is wrong on this matter.

1.2. An Explanation About the Problem and Analysis

As one may expect, then, truth-talk will dominate the present study. I will try to find answers to such questions as "What makes a statement true?", "Is the truth of a statement independent of evidence?" and "What is the connection between true statements and that particular cognitive state we call 'knowledge'?" Such answers are important from a philosophical *and* everyday point of view: we would like to *know*, for instance, the *true* story about people who are accused of wrongdoings as well as those about UFOs, fossils, human Long Term Memory, behavior of electromagnetic fields during signal transmission, and so on. Yet, the common (and intuitively plausible) definitions associated with the concepts of "knowledge" and "truth" prove, upon closer examination, rather problematic. The issues surrounding these two notions have caused the growth of an immense literature in epistemology under the rubric *realism* (and *anti-realism*). In this study, these labels well established in the academic circles will be employed as a point of departure to analyze the connection between propositional truth (or truth-bearers) and empirical knowledge.

At the very outset, a clarification regarding one of our most central concepts: *Truth-bearers* are those semantic (and perhaps even metaphysical or doxastic) entities which are capable of being true or false. The most immediate example is, of course, *propositions*. However, the problem of determining the exact semantical/ontological nature of propositions is an intricate issue. I tend to agree with those who consider propositions as residing in "no man's land" which is alleged to lie somewhere between concepts and (external) objects.[2] It is my conviction that my arguments in this study do not, in their essence, hinge upon the question about the nature of propositions. I will continue to employ, for the sake of convenience, the terms 'proposition' and 'propositional' in my discussion just to refer to "what a truth-bearer states," without attributing to those terms any ontological significance. If, however, this may raise eyebrows, I am prepared to sacrifice the usage altogether. I will also take "statements" and "beliefs" (along with propositions) to be instances of truth-bearers—though I consider this an unsettled philosophical issue.

Let us start with the classical conception of knowledge. The traditional definition of sentential or propositional knowledge, a version of which was suggested by Plato, is as follows: an epistemic subject *S* is said to know a certain proposition *p* if and only if

(i) *S* believes (or accepts) that *p*,
(ii) *S* is justified (or has sufficient evidence) to believe that *p*, and
(iii) *p* is true.

---

[2] See, e.g., Cirera 1994, p. 7.

Ever since Edmund Gettier unmistakably demonstrated in 1963 that so long as (iii) is a non-redundant condition, in certain cases *S* could actually fail to know an empirical proposition *p* even if all three conditions above were clearly satisfied, philosophers have been anxious to render the classical definition a tenable one by supplementing it with further conditions such as those about *S*'s justification or those involving subjunctive conditionals with respect to S's doxastic/epistemic states, etc. While the "belief condition" is seen to be the least controversial one among the three, the second condition has always been at the focus of attention, giving rise to generation of an immense literature rich in diverse approaches and different theories concerning epistemic justification. Given the central theme of this study, I will leave aside most of the issues surrounding the concept of epistemic justification since this may give rise to serious digression. However, the justification-truth connection is not only a highly interesting and significant one for any philosophical project striving to shed light on human knowledge but will in fact prove to be rather relevant and important for the present account as well. Hence, I will come back to this matter later in this study.

In short, the first and (especially) the second conditions require a lot of scrutiny and refinement as they seem to be essential—though not uncontroversial or crystal clear—parts or aspects of propositional knowledge that human agents commonly possess. The truth condition, on the other hand, poses a different sort of philosophical issue. Let us first stress that (iii) above is notably different from both (i) and (ii) in that it is *not* about the doxastic or justificatory state of *S*; rather, it concerns semantics and metaphysics. According to the traditional view, the truth condition "secures" that in a particular instance of propositional knowledge the knower is *actually* and *veridically* connected to "what is happening out there." Conversely, even if *S* might have perfectly good reasons to believe a *false* proposition, we should deny her knowledge of it. As far as the "received view" is concerned, truth is one principal condition of *S*'s knowing that *p*, and, *furthermore*, it is totally independent of the cognitive or mental states of *S*. This particular view of the role of truth in our epistemic actions has become the orthodoxy among analytic philosophers who, generally speaking, regard the tripartite definition as the correct analysis of human knowledge.

The present study aims to constitute a challenge to this orthodoxy. While I am convinced that my proposal points at least in the right direction, I know no easy way to the intended destination. Consequently, the journey has to be through an arduous walking path based on a complicated itinerary, rather than by a comfortable flight. My excuse for this is that I must deal, along the way, with three different but related dimensions of *realism* in epistemology: ontological, semantic or alethic, and epistemic—which are quite often confused in contemporary epistemology literature. The first dimension of the subject matter is, understandably, metaphysical. In trying to come up with a defensible account of the truth-knowledge connection, I need first to clarify the lay of the epistemological land. Truth of a statement is checked against "the world." This tenet is embraced, I think, by the great majority of philosophers theorizing in this field. The consensus terminates abruptly, however, when it comes to the specification of the ontology that is to be associated with the word 'world'. The second issue is about "truth" itself. Is the truth of a statement independent of such factors as our interests, cognitive capacities, socio-linguistic conventions, and the strongest evidence we possess? This second axis of realism connects to the ontological problem with the crucial question "What makes certain statements true and certain others false?" on which epistemologists have been spending most of their mental energy for the last few decades. This question is arguably the heart of the matter, and we will have to devote considerable space for its discussion. The third dimension is one that has been mostly overlooked: the relation between propositional knowledge and propositional truth. As I have briefly mentioned above, few people in the history of analytic philosophy seriously questioned truth's being a condition of knowledge. It is among my primary intentions in this study to stir this epistemic sacrosanctity.

Before we begin to deal with the traditional account of propositional knowledge, I wish to clarify what sort of an analytic activity I will be engaged in here by distinguishing two possible senses of the term 'definition'.[3] Broadly speaking, definition can be understood as

1. giving the necessary and sufficient conditions for the application of terms; or
2. giving some sort of explanation.

R. Millikan employs the terms 'conceptual analysis' and '*descriptive* definition' in association with the former, and 'scientific explanation' and '*theoretical* definition' for the latter.[4] In order get a better grasp on how *2* differs from *1*, we can take a brief look at the first pages of Carnap's *Logical Foundations of Probability* where he elucidates his notion of an "explication." He writes:

> By the procedure of *explication* we mean the transformation of an inexact, prescientific concept, the *explicandum*, into a new exact concept, the *explicatum*. Although the explicandum cannot be given in exact terms, it should be made as clear as possible by informal explanations and examples.[5]

The explicandum may be taken, Carnap says, from everyday language, or it might belong to a previous stage in the development of scientific language. Accordingly, explication is wider than the procedures of analysis and clarification. In most cases, the explicatum deviates from the explicandum but still takes its place in some way. Carnap then gives four requirements for an explicatum: (a) similarity to the explicandum, (b) exactness, (c) fruitfulness, and (d) simplicity. Explication, understood as such, obviously goes beyond merely reporting the pre-existing synonymies.[6] It improves what is to be explained (or defined) by "refining" and "supplementing" its meaning.

I take my task in the present study to be an *explication* of our common, actual, everyday notion of truth. I regard the phenomenon to be explained as a given: ordinary human cognizers (as opposed to professional philosophers) earnestly, unwaveringly, and continuously believe that they have empirical knowledge *in the actual world*, and it is—as will be clearer in my discussion—counterintuitive and ultimately futile to strive to show by means of arguments and/or conceptual analysis that in fact they never or seldom have *that kind of* knowledge. This, however, does *not* necessarily mean that when epistemic agents use the word 'know,' they are fully aware of its semantic and/or epistemological implications. Hence, in the following sections, I will dwell on the "nature" of common human knowledge and offer some elucidations.

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[3] I have given this account in my 1999b.
[4] Millikan 1989, pp. 290-291.
[5] Carnap 1962, pp. 3-18.
[6] Quine 1961a, p. 25.

My project, in the overall, is an attempt to steer clear of—in the broadest terms—two epistemo-ontological "pictures" that I find rather misguided. There is, on the one hand, the "objectivist" world-view inherited presumably from the Plato-Aristotle tradition, according to which the world and "truths" are the fixed furniture of ontology and cognizers strive to copy, and adapt themselves to, that external reality existing independently of epistemic agents. On the other hand, we have the "subjectivist" camp which tends to close or undermine the apparent gap between the realm given to possible human experience and whatever is supposed to lie outside of it (e.g., the world prior to or independent of human conceptualization).[7] One customary strategy the latter group of thinkers employ is to proclaim that the latter (transempirical) realm is a chimera generated out of philosophical imagination and that truth is in fact a human product. In this context, Kant's original contribution is often acknowledged by many scholars to be an extremely interesting and significant one in that he attempts to maintain *both* that there is something beyond our cognitive reach *and* that what is epistemically available to us in general is objective, genuine knowledge. I am among those who find this insight not just path-breaking but *essentially correct*. Despite the fact that Kant advocated an idealist ontology, he was not, properly speaking, a subjectivist. In the remainder of the present study an attempt will be made to construct and defend a linguistic Kantian epistemology and to combat the two schools of thought mentioned above.

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[7] Putnam (1994c, p. 447) calls these two positions "reactionary metaphysics" and "irresponsible relativism," respectively.

1.3. Realism(s) in Epistemology

The literature related to realism, especially in philosophy of science and epistemology, is currently a mess. The reader typically finds herself unable to associate one thinker's conception of realism or anti-realism with that of another; as a matter of fact, in most cases one gets the impression that these philosophers are writing on quite different issues rather than on a general problem with many facets. This is frustrating, if not embarrassing, and one cannot but think that such lack of communication is indicative not simply of the profundity of the pertinent problems, but, in a rather alarming way, of a lack of conceptual clarity on this matter.

Let me try to illustrate what I mean. One classical statement of the dispute between realism and anti-realism was given by M. Dummett in his seminal book *Truth and Other Enigmas* (1978), where he described these opposing views as relating to the *statements*, rather than to terms or entities. I will quote him to some length because the characterization he provided is helpful in getting an initial picture of the debate.

> Realism I characterise as the belief that statements [about the physical world, about the mental events, the past, the present, etc.] possess an objective truth-value, independently of our means of knowing it: they are true or false in virtue of a reality existing independently of us. The anti-realist opposes to this the view that [such statements] are to be understood only by reference to the sort of thing which we would count as evidence for a statement of that class. That is, the realist holds that the meanings of [those] statements are not directly tied to the kind of evidence for them that we can have, but consists in the manner of their determination as true or false by states of affairs whose existence is not dependent on our possession of evidence for them. The anti-realist insists, on the contrary, that the meanings of those statements are tied directly to what we count as evidence for them, in such a way that a statement . . ., if true at all, can be true only in virtue of something of which we could know and which we should count as evidence for its truth.[8]

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[8] Dummett 1978, p. 146.

Dummett adds that the essential question is hence about the notion of *truth* applicable to our statements and the kind of *meaning* they do have.

We should not fail to note that Dummett runs a number of philosophical issues together in this condensed passage. More specifically, he is talking about the independent reality, the states of affairs, objectivity, meaning, truth of statements, and the relation between truth and evidence. Such conglomeration of the different aspects of the matter is unfortunately rather typical of the way realism has been presented and discussed in the pertinent literature for the last few decades. For example, another influential philosopher, H. Putnam, offered the following characterization of "metaphysical realism" in his *Reason, Truth and History*:

> On this perspective, the world consists of some fixed totality of mind-independent objects. There is exactly one true and complete description of 'the way the world is'. Truth involves some sort of correspondence relation between words or thought-signs and external things and sets of things.[9]

The same problem recurs here, actually in a more aggravated form: Putnam gives the name metaphysical realism to a position which is apparently not only about "metaphysics"—roughly, the philosophical investigation of the nature and structure of reality—but about our epistemic connection with the world via *truth* and also one *particular* sort of it, viz., correspondence between symbols (e.g., words) and external reality. Without a doubt, these are fairly separate, though certainly related, issues and it is somewhat confusing and misleading to lump together such metaphysical, epistemic, and semantic notions which philosophers would normally like to keep distinct in their analyses.

As I have hinted above, it is currently a desideratum in the epistemology literature to have some categorization and elucidation vis-à-vis the different senses or aspects of *realism*. Hence, I will begin my discussion of propositional knowledge by offering a broad classification of the "realisms" that appear in the literature.[10] I maintain that there are three main dimensions of realism in epistemology:[11]

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[9] Putnam 1986, p. 49.

(a) Metaphysical Realism (MR) is about the existence of *objects* and, thus, it *prima facie* has no epistemic or semantic implications. The MRist argues (minimally) that the physical objects in our universe exist independently of our beliefs, theories, and epistemic powers to form beliefs and theorize about the world. As such, MR_{MIN} is the claim that there *are* things not depending on cognizers for their existence. Of course MRists need not, and typically do not, stop at such a modest level of ontological realism. Many of them defend what we may call MR_{MAX}, the thesis that there would still be existing objects *as such-and-such* even if there were no human beings to perceive and think about them. These claims—both the weak and the strong—normally sound like truisms, and it may be difficult to envisage how an anti-MR would look like or if anybody would reasonably defend it. Nevertheless, in addition to certain traditional idealists who arguably opposed to MR_{MIN}, some sort of anti-MR_{MAX} has been defended more recently, for example, by Putnam who criticizes part of *his* characterization of metaphysical realism by contending that "*what objects does the world consists of?* is a question that it only makes sense to ask only *within* a theory or description."[12] Accordingly, anti-MR_{MAX} à la Putnam rejects the idea that a planet would exist *as a planet* even in the absence of human beings who conceptualize it as such.

(b) Alethic Realism (AR) concerns the structure or nature of *truth* or *truthmakers*. Broadly, I take it as the thesis that whether a statement is true or not is independent of our

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[10] And I will do this in the main without providing a survey and analysis of the most central concepts I will be employing. This is mainly because I believe that there is still a vast amount of philosophical work to be done even in the absence of exactness about the true ontological and/or semantical nature of entities/notions such as proposition, fact, reference and correspondence. I will take the "intuitively understood" (and more or less agreed) definitions for granted though I am well aware that a thorough analysis of epistemological realism requires being sufficiently clear about such niceties.

[11] I have offered an earlier version of this classification and the particular blend of realisms and anti-realisms which I will develop here in my (1999a).

[12] Putnam 1986, p. 49. It might be thought that the distinction between the minimal and maximal versions of MR is somehow redundant. I will try to show in Chapter Three that this is not the case.

epistemic means such as justification, warrant, or evidence. Being understood this way, AR is silent about the possibility of knowledge or certainty. ARists often distinguish the "meaning of truth" from the "test of truth," hence generally postulating, implicitly or explicitly, some sort of logical gap between truth and evidence.[13] In this sense, anti-AR, as described and propounded by Dummett, amounts to the *rejection* of such a logical gap and, therefore, of the idea that truth is logically/conceptually independent of evidence or justification.

(c) Epistemic Realism (ER) is about the *relation* between truth and propositional knowledge. It simply asserts that in order for a proposition to be known by a cognizer, it must be true. In other words, truth is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition of propositional empirical knowledge.

The great majority of contemporary epistemologists embrace MR_{MAX} (thus, *a fortiori* MR_{MIN}), ER, and (with somewhat weaker consensus) AR as correct theses: it seems commonsensical to many to assume, first, that the existence of common physical objects of the mezzo-universe is not dependent upon the way we represent them to ourselves, second, that only true statements, not the false ones, can be known, and, lastly, that propositional truth is independent of our epistemic means and cognitive states.

To elucidate a bit the interrelations among the notions knowledge, truth, and realism, let us observe the following points: First, the tripartite definition is clearly realist in the sense of ER. Second, it is *prima facie* neutral with respect to AR and MR. Third, so far as the above definitions go, being an MRist and being an ARist do not imply each other.[14] You can defend MR while remaining skeptical about the nature of truth. What about the reverse entailment? Does AR imply MR? Apparently not. One may believe that truth consists in some sort of "non-arbitrary" or "structured" relations without invoking the idea of "objects being out there." Fourth, the above definitions do not necessitate, as they stand, any particular interpretation of truth. To mention one, the correspondence theory of truth is one possible (but a very common and highly esteemed) construal of AR where truth-bearers are alleged to "correspond" to mind-independent facts. Given my arguments above I wish to draw the conclusion that MR, AR, and ER are claims rather independent of one another. However, it is worth mentioning that in spite of what I have said thus far concerning the conceptual discreteness of these "realisms," in the literature of analytic epistemology various aspects of the matter are connected. Generally speaking, philosophers who dwelt upon the tripartite definition have *de facto* been MRist and ARist—not to mention their being ERist. A good many epistemologists subscribe to AR and MR simultaneously for an apparent reason: if truth is to be construed as a kind of correspondence between tokens of our language and things "out there," it seems just natural to assume that these entities would exist even in the absence of cognitive agents like ourselves.[15]

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[13] See, e.g., Russell (1974).

[14] Devitt (1991, pp. 34-46) defends a similar thesis although he equates realism with what I call MR.

1.4. The Plan

I will treat the three aspects of realism separately. As I have mentioned above, realism about *knowledge* (rather, about truth's being a condition of propositional knowledge) is virtually sacrosanct. Realism about the *nature of truth*, despite its being accepted by most of contemporary epistemologists, is in fact a can of worms. I will come to AR and ER after tackling the relevant metaphysical issues. The plan of this study is as follows:

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[15] This classification is not meant to be an accurate reflection of what the contemporary philosophers have in mind when they talk about those realisms. Thus, my MR is not the Metaphysical Realism that Hilary Putnam described and criticized in *Reason, Truth and History* (1986). As I have displayed in this section, Putnam's realist has it that MR is not only about the external objects and/or facts but also about our alethic connection with them. Similarly, My AR differs from the account William Alston offered in his *A Realist Conception of Truth* (1996) in that Alston's realism comes with certain implications about the world. He remarks that "truth is a *realist* affair, having to do with things being as they are stated to be" (p. 49). Accordingly, realism involves the *independent* and *real* existence of things (p. 65). Despite the fact that Alston refrains from claiming that MR necessarily dictates AR, he generally thinks that "alethic realism implies that what makes statements true or false is independent of our thought and talk" (p. 84)—hence displaying his MRist side in his defense of AR. Unlike these characterizations, my three kinds of realism are to provide, as it were, the mutually perpendicular axes of a (philosophical) coordinate system in the sense that they are as independent of one another as philosophically possible. This is an idealization, almost like a "frictionless surface," by means of which I try to dismantle realism and point to its tenable and untenable parts or aspects.

Chapters Two and Three discuss the ontological basis for the account I will develop in this study. In Chapter Two, I offer a critical examination of one of the most famous formulations of the classical correspondence theory of truth, viz., factualism. Although I find factualism more "useful"—when it comes to explaining the "making of truths"—than its principal rival which takes *things* as fundamental entities of ontology, it seems to be subject to certain objections from a metaphysical point of view. I will focus on David Armstrong's Tractarian factualism and explain its ontological treatment of propositional truth, that is, as being made by the mind-independent states of affairs.

In Chapter Three, I criticize Armstrong's ontology of the phenomenal states of affairs from a Putnamian point of view. The essence of my argument is that Armstrong's realism regarding facts and his purely extensionalist approach to truthmakers are untenable positions from a linguistic Kantian perspective. I agree with Putnam that truths are formed and fashioned within conceptual schemes. But I reject Putnam's rather un-Kantain idea of getting rid of the in-itself reality. The result is a quasi-realist conception of the world and its and truthmakers.

Donald Davidson has posed a significant challenge for the defenders of any scheme-based semantics. In Chapter Four I expose his holism and minimalist semantics which is inspired by the Quinean and Tarskian perspectives. In the following chapter, I argue that Davidson's verificationism or quasi-behaviorism is not a viable position. I support my claims using the case of the transition from behaviorism to cognitivism in experimental psychology and certain cross-cultural examples.

Chapter Six is where I offer my own alethic account after criticizing both the classical correspondence and anti-realist views. I argue that while the idea of a nonepistemic truth is a tenable one, the correspondence relation envisaged between our statements and facts—which are embedded in the external reality and exist independently of conceptualization—cannot be rendered intelligible and, hence, cannot be employed as a foundational concept by AR. This naturally requires an interpretation of propositional truth different from the traditional "picturing" or "mirroring" theories of correspondence, if AR is not to be given up altogether.

The particular construal I have in mind is the following. Although propositional truth can reasonably be defined as some sort of fitting or correspondence between symbols and "reality," the latter needs to be conceptualized or "framed" by human cognizers in order for the relation of correspondence to make philosophical sense. Frameworks are defined as forms or styles of getting into cognitive contact and dealing with the states of affairs of the phenomenal world; and such interaction includes, but is not limited to, reasoning, communication and deliberate action. In a nutshell, Frameworks provide us with "interpretative contexts" by which we can make sense of reality and successfully act in a linguistic community. I contend that both facts and propositional truths are internal to Frameworks and that there can be no truths not determined and fashioned by some Framework. The crucial point in my account is that it makes little sense to talk about "truths" *in* a world where cognizers do not exist. Without epistemic agents, there are no language and Frameworks; without Frameworks there are no facts and truths. I must remark at this point that what I am propounding here is still a realist conception of truth in that the logical gap between evidence and propositional truth is preserved. However, it is substantially different from the traditional view in that *truth* is relativized to the way reality gets conceptualized by human beings.

I have briefly mentioned above that the idea of a nonepistemic truth seems in essence to be a defensible one. But what are the implications of adopting this sort of realism? In particular, does it have any bearing on the plausibility of ER? Chapter Seven is devoted to this question. My claim is that the literature thus far has failed, generally speaking, to discern the epistemological consequences of AR. I am inclined to think that AR poses an unsuspected threat to the classical tripartite definition of propositional knowledge. The problem stems from the fact that nonepistemic truth in that definition turns empirical knowledge into a somewhat mysterious feat. That is, if there is no way to bridge the logical gap between evidence and propositional truth, and if ordinary (i.e., non-omniscient) human agents can only collect evidence and strive to have justified beliefs, it seems unlikely that the truth condition in the tripartite definition in general serves any *actual* epistemic purpose. The surprising upshot of all this, acutely perceived by philosophers like K. Popper and R. Almeder, is that we do not (and cannot) have an awareness of the "fact" that we stumble upon truths. Analytic epistemology have inexplicably failed to discern and deal with this interesting epistemic picture and comfortably used the thesis of ER *in conjunction with* AR. An elucidation and critique of this point will constitute one linchpin of my project.

Chapter Eight is about metaknowledge where I dwell on the *KK-thesis*, viz., the claim that if *S* knows that *p*, *S* knows that *S* knows that *p*. This issue will be taken up within the framework of the realism-antirealism debate. I will conclude that plain realism (ER *cum* AR) gets into serious epistemological problems on this matter and that it is not capable of properly handling the problem of metaknowledge. I intend to show that the solution I propose for the first-level propositional empirical knowledge also explains and "demystifies" metaknowledge.

The discussion of higher-level knowledge will in fact prove to be highly crucial for the purposes of my account in the following way. Let us tentatively admit, as I suggest, that the truth condition in the classical tripartite definition is not an operational or functional one (that is to say, a finite cognizer cannot possibly check out, other than via evidential means, that it is actually being satisfied in a particular instance of alleged knowledge). But why, one may ask, should this be a compelling reason to reject the idea that nonepistemic truth is among the conditions of propositional knowledge? Many philosophers have indeed contended that an epistemic agent is *not* required to know that she really knows that *p* in order for her to know that *p*. Hence, it might be argued that we can still hold on to the truth condition and, if this is correct, the argument I am trying to level against ER looks like a moot one. I concede that such a defense is available to the ERist. Nonetheless, I am inclined to think that ER (with AR) gets into a serious epistemological problem regarding the KK-thesis. I put the following dilemma to the realist: if she embraces the KK-thesis, she arguably gets deprived of the logical gap pertaining to the lower levels of knowledge and, hence, contradicts one core idea of AR; if, on the other hand, she denies the KK-thesis, she brings about an undue externalization of our common epistemic states by blindfolding the knowers and making empirical knowledge a virtually fortuitous mental state or cognitive act.

In Chapter Nine, I briefly look at a special case of the fourth-condition analyses to assess if they pose a threat to my epistemic account, focusing mainly on Pollock's treatment of the issue. I argue that an externalist undefeasibility clause employed to turn the tripartite definition into a tetrapartite one is problematic in the same way as the realist truth condition is. I further claim that my version of linguistic Kantianism can be used to transform Pollock's definition into a more tenable characterization of propositional knowledge.

This brings me to a decisive issue: Is it possible to get a coherent and tenable picture of empirical knowledge given the strengths and weaknesses of these three sorts of realisms and what emerges out of my discussion of metaknowledge? As will be clear in the following chapters, my strategy in this study is the following: instead of presupposing and working against the background of a certain epistemological perspective throughout my discussion, I subject AR and ER to critical scrutiny in order to assess their tenability, and *then* attempt to construct a theory of empirical knowledge in the light of the results that will emerge from my treatment of these realisms. My conclusion of the pertinent analysis is that while AR is an essentially correct view, the simultaneous and unqualified acceptance of ER and AR yields a chimera which has no place in the actual human agents' epistemic actions. For this reason (and putting it in a straightforward manner), I think that contemporary theory of knowledge is based on a fundamentally mistaken idea. I argue that propositional truth can reasonably be regarded as an "object of desire" with respect to propositional knowledge although it can never be a condition of the sort knowledge possessed by finite cognizers.

This, however, gives rise to a strange epistemological picture: while truth is characterized and maintained to be a nonepistemic notion, it appears to be beyond our epistemic reach and, thus, is "useless" from a pragmatic point of view. At this point, there are seemingly three alternatives: First, to give up the idea that the truth condition in the classical definition is a problematic one, and to adopt full realism. Second, to abandon AR and embrace an epistemic notion of truth—as in the case of pragmatism. Third, to argue that although this unusual epistemic picture I offer (viz., anti-ER *cum* AR) may sound somewhat peculiar and counter-intuitive, it is actually the customary analysis of human knowledge and certain intuitions we have about it which are flawed and misguided philosophically. The project to be developed here dwells on this diagnosis and tries to materialize the third alternative, capitalizing on the fact that the other two options are seen to be highly problematic in the light my evaluation of the above-described realisms. I nonetheless aim at making more than just a negative point as will become clear in due course.

To sum up, the central aim of this study is to combine the strengths of the traditional realist account and its rivals in a coherent manner towards a tenable solution to the problem of analyzing *actual human knowledge* and its connection with our conception of *truth* and *reality*—hence the title "Alethic Actualism." Epistemologists often used the terms 'true' and 'knowledge' without paying much attention to their "nature" or to the implications of admitting, for instance, the former of these notions into our definition of the latter. The consensus among the analytic epistemologists is seemingly that we all tacitly and unproblematically grasp both the analysandum and the analysans. My project aims, broadly speaking, to show *inter alia* that this attitude has given rise to a fairly misleading picture of human knowledge. The crux of my theory is that although our statements are made true or false because of what occurs in some reality which exists independently of our theories about it, "truth-making" is intelligible only in the presence of particular linguistic/cognitive frameworks that *we* produce and impose upon such reality. Consequently, truth has a subjective (or "human") dimension as well as an objective (or "external") one. I believe that this is the key to understanding the nature of truth and also the theoretical limits of human knowledge. My present account gestures towards a Kantian notion of empirical knowledge: human agents *can* and *do* have genuine knowledge of the world around them, but its scope is unfortunately more "modest" and "restricted" than what we have generally supposed it to be.

CHAPTER TWO

Factualism: An Ontological Basis

2.1. The Tractarian Heritage

Alethic Realism, viewed from a slightly different perspective, is actually a negative claim. It asserts that individual agents' doxastic or epistemic states *neither* make *nor* affect propositional truths. Quite naturally, the ARist is then to counter the question of *what* "makes" such truths. One common answer, a popular version of which was spelled out and defended by L. Wittgenstein in the *Tractatus*, is that a statement is true if it *corresponds* to a fact, and false if there is no such fact in reality. It may be useful, for the purposes of this study, to briefly look at how Wittgenstein builds an ontology of facts in the *Tractatus*. According to his metaphysical account, objects are the substance of this world (*T* 2.021) and their various combinations give rise to states of affairs.[1] Wittgenstein thinks that both actual and nonactual states of affairs are embedded in logical space (*T* 1.13, 2.013, 2.04, 2.05). If a state of affairs actually obtains, it is a fact; otherwise it is just a possible combination of objects which does not (but could) obtain in reality. Given all things (objects), one is thereby given all possibilities, that is, all possible ways that objects may combine with each other to yield states of affairs. Objects are fixed and only their combinations change (*T* 2.02, 2.021). Hence, a proposition which is true at a certain time might be false at another; but no changes can occur within the elements or their names. The world is the totality of existent states of affairs (facts) and, as such, the facts also determine the nonexistent (or merely possible) states of affairs. The existent and nonexistent states of affairs together make up the reality (*T* 2.06). Moreover, since "[a]tomic facts are independent of each other," (*T*

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[1] All references are to *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (1981).

2.061) given the existence (or nonexistence) of a particular state of affairs, we *cannot* make an inference from this piece of information about the existence (or nonexistence) of another state of affairs (*T* 2.062).

Wittgenstein follows the tradition by endorsing the idea that there are two ways in which language may be said to correspond to or match reality. These are *word-object* and *truthbearer-fact* relations. The meaning of a word is the object for which the word stands. The truth of a proposition depends on the existence of the states of affairs described by a pertinent sentence. Representation of states of affairs by propositions is basically a "picturing relation" which involves three elements: that which is depicted, the picture of it (a thought), and the expression of this in language. Such a representation is possible mainly because both our language and reality have the same *logical* form. Actually, the relation between language and reality is not separate from that between proposition and fact. Language is part of reality, and both a picture and its expression (proposition) are facts (*T* 2.141, 3.14). In the process of representation, therefore, a fact represents another fact—one of them being part of our symbolic system.

If language can legitimately be used only for the representation or description of states of affairs (as understood by Wittgenstein), it follows that there cannot be any ethical, esthetical, metaphysical (broadly, *philosophical*) propositions, and this is precisely because there are no "philosophical facts" for them to correspond to. Consequently, even though in everyday discourse we always make statements about morality, deity, and beauty, they have no place in the ontological picture Wittgenstein propounds. Despite the fact that they *appear* to us as significant and indispensable aspects of our world, they are "in fact" *not in the world.*[2]

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[2] Still, Wittgenstein does not think that our value judgments are entirely nonsensical or meaningless. Rather, they are "transcendental" just as logical propositions are (6.13, 6.421)—even though, I think, for Wittgenstein logical and ethical/esthetical sentences or statements are transcendental in *different* ways.

Wittgenstein's idea that the world is made up of facts, not objects, is called *factualism*. This is contrasted with *thingism* according to which only the subject term of a proposition must be taken with ontological seriousness.[3] One prominent advantage of factualism over its rivals is that it can easily explain how propositional truths are made: *facts*, taken alone or in various combinations, *are* the truthmakers. It is interesting to note that facts, in contrast to objects, have a rather short history in our philosophical repertoire. Despite their late debut, during this century a number of good arguments have been given in favor of the existence of facts or state of affairs. Later in this chapter, I will examine D. M. Armstrong's recent defense of factualism. Before doing that, however, let us try to understand why we need facts in the first place.

2.2. The Need for Facts

Why did "facts" appear on the philosophical stage so lately? One plausible answer to this question comes from the historical fact that the emergence of "facts" coincides more or less with that of *relations*.[4] In the Aristotelian tradition, a thing can be either a substance or an attribute of a substance. Accordingly, only the former can have independent existence; the latter (e.g., properties of objects), by contrast, exist only "in" the objects. It was Russell who introduced the notion of a relation's being "between" things, thus avoiding many counter-intuitive implications of the substance-attribute ontology. To give an example, Socrates's being shorter than Plato is, according to the tradition, an attribute of the former. Obviously, the number of such properties—which are bestowed on Socrates due to standing "in relation to" other primary substances—must be indefinitely large. However, it is not clear how this primary substance called "Socrates" can hold, within himself, such indefinitely many properties. A more plausible alternative would of course be to say that these "attributes" are not some sort of properties of the individual but, rather, relations that are external to the "primary substance."

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[3] This view has been defended, for example, by Quine. See Armstrong 1997, p. 114.
[4] See Olson 1987, pp. 19-21 and Armstrong 1997, pp. 113-114.

Once we admit that relations are not "in" the objects, we open the door to a metaphysics of facts in the following way. We are first given the objects of the world (or universe). We allow that these objects have properties—these being either universals or particulars. But if we stop at this point and declare that this is all for our ontology, we leave the entire cosmic picture incomplete. Without (external) relations, the ways that individual objects stand to each other would be missing totally. A world merely of objects (and their properties) is not a world at all. We need something more than just a conglomeration of individuals to get a world. When this "something more" is added, we obtain a world where objects have certain properties *and* stand in certain relations to each other. And given that those relations must be external to the objects, we inevitably get something more than just a world of objects; we get *a world of facts*.

2.3. Armstrong's World of States of Affairs

As I have discussed above, one alleged problem of the claim that our world is made up of objects is that it fails to account for the "making of truths." For a factualist like Armstrong atomic states of affairs, rather than objects, are the building blocks *and* truthmakers of the world. This idea rests not only on the supposition that reality is structured but, more crucially, that it has a *propositional* structure—without implying that it is *linguistic*.[5] According to Armstrong's version of factualism, the constituents of states of affairs are *particulars* and *universals*. But a state of affairs is not merely a mereological sum of these elements.[6] To see this, take two particulars *a* and *b*, and a binary relation *H*. Even though *Hab* and *Hba* have the same constituents (hence the same mereological sum), they can be totally independent states of affairs—as in the case of "*a* hates *b*" and "*b* hates *a*." While these two statements involve the same particulars and one common relation, they express different *truths*. In this ontological picture, universals (properties and relations) are understood in a rather Aristotelian fashion in that they are instantiated in (or via) particulars. Particulars, on the other hand, can be envisaged either to be "bare," "propertiless," etc., or as possessing/instantiating some universal(s). Armstrong calls the former—which "seems to be for the contemplation of the ontologist alone"[7]—"thin" and the latter "thick" particular. Being conceived this way, a thick particular is not different from a state of affairs.

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[5] See Armstrong 1997, p. 3, p. 58, and p. 138.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 119. See also Olson 1987, p. iv.

Armstrong's salient Aristotelian and Tractarian tendencies may make him seem like an old-fashioned metaphysician who is comfortable with the idea of freely positing ontological entities or constructing schemes within the confines of armchair metaphysics. As he makes it sufficiently clear throughout the book, Armstrong is nevertheless a naturalist, that is, one who believes that "the space-time system is all that there is . . ."[8] He also believes that physical sciences, rather than *a priori* metaphysics, have the promise of giving us a complete description of the ultimate building blocks of the world or existence—i.e., an account of the most elementary or foundational particulars, universals, and states of affairs. As a result of his naturalism, Armstrong finds himself compelled, as we will see shortly, to adopt a "parsimonious" attitude towards ontology in general, and to use the metaphysical razor in order not to multiply objects or things beyond necessity.

One immediate problem arises. Even though the thesis of naturalism is a reasonable and attractive one, it also poses a potential threat to Armstrong's overall theory. How can we account for negative truths, if the thesis of naturalism is correct? What is the truthmaker of a statement that talks about a merely possible situation? Faced with the first problem, B. Russell had to introduce negative facts into ontology in order to explicate the truth-making relation associated with such propositions. This obviously cannot be a satisfactory option for a naturalist metaphysician. The number of negative propositions are infinite and the totality of negative facts which are supposed to "make" negative truths are an unpalatable and problematic addition to reality. Hence, one crucial task confronting a naturalist who also holds that there are no truths without related truthmakers is to find out what makes negative truths true without slipping either into thingism or towards extravagant ontologies.

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[7] Armstrong 1997, p. 124.

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 5.

Armstrong's solution to this predicament is to argue that the first order actual states of affairs are all we need to generate various sorts of truths. The theoretical device he employs to get this idea off the ground is *supervenience*. Simply stated, for Armstrong an entity Y supervenes on another entity X if and only if X's existence necessitates or entails that of Y.[9] In other words, given X we get Y *gratis*—one could also say "*ipso facto*" or "automatically." We can now explain the truthmakers of negative propositions. Take a very simple universe with two thick particulars and, therefore, two actual states of affairs: *Fa* and *Gb*.[10] We assume for the sake of simplicity there are no relational properties in that world. What would be the truthmaker of the true propositions not-*Fb* and not-*Ga*? Armstrong thinks that the two positive states of affairs *and* a second-order state of affairs (i.e., that *Fa* and *Gb* are the only first-order states of affairs) are sufficient to make the two negative statements true; and this means that the two "negative truths" will supervene on the positive truths in that world. To give another example, if "*Fa*" is contingently true, "after the original instantiation [of *F* by *a*], all the further relations postulated *supervene.*"[11] So while propositions like "It is true that *Fa*" and "It is true that it is true that *Fa*" are all made true, our ontology does not suffer from an pernicious inflation of truth-making relations springing from just one contingent (actual) state of affairs because there is no increase of being in this case. It is the subvenient entity that "really" exists; whatever supervenes on it is, ontologically speaking, nothing more than that metaphysical base. It must be noted here that the supervening entity is typically not

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[9] *Ibid.*, pp. 12-13.
[10] *Ibid.*, p. 134.
[11] *Ibid.*, p. 119.

identical to what it supervenes upon. As Armstrong explains, relation of supervenience becomes an identity relation only when there is symmetry involved in it (as in the case of a part-whole relation).[12]

To sum up, in the ontology Armstrong sketches, only first order states of affairs exist, and they (or, rather, their constituents) are the truthmakers of *all* sorts of truths; hence, negative, disjunctive, modal, and higher-order truths all supervene on the first order ones. Truthmakers are, we are reminded, the "makers" of such truths by virtue of *the internal relations of identity and difference holding among their constituents*—particulars and universals. But this is *prima facie* confusing: if we accept this ontological picture without further qualification, it becomes difficult to see how a "truthmaking" by/of an actual, first-order state of affairs (like *Fa*) differs from the other sorts of truthmaking (e.g., negative, modal). Even if we understand that truths of propositions like *Fa* and not-*Ga* are principally due to *F*'s being different from *G*, *a*'s being different from *b*, and so on, it is not quite satisfactory, for the purposes of Armstrong's metaphysical factualim, to leave matters at that stage of ontological analysis. So how can such a factualist show that the former kind (i.e., the actual, first-order state of affairs like *Fa*) is somewhat different from the others (and "ontologically privileged")—as would be demanded by any naturalist theory? I suppose a tenable answer can be found within the framework of Armstrong's account. It goes as follows. Each and every truth requires a truthmaker. In case of a plain truth like "This pen is blue," the truthmaker is the state of affairs "this pen's being blue," taken as a *structured whole*.[13] Thus, the truth in this case supervenes on the state of affairs as a formed unity (that is, as something more than just a mereological sum). When, however, we search for a truthmaker for a statement like "It is (merely) possible that this pen is red" or "It is not the case that this pen is blue," we need to dig deeper. For example, what makes the former of these two truth-bearers true are the

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[12] *Ibid.*, p. 12, p. 123.

[13] My examples here are not meant to suggest that Armstrong regards common properties like "being blue" and objects like "pen" to be ultimate or "genuine" furniture of the world. As we will see in this chapter, Armstrong actually assigns some "second-class" status to the common (or phenomenal) universals and particulars, without implying that they are unreal.

constituents of the existent state of affairs "this pen's being blue" (viz., the pen and the property of being blue) *and* the internal relation of difference holding between the two properties (being blue and being red) and, one may add, the independence of the two states of affairs "This pen is blue" and "This pen is red". In short, the relevant states of affairs provide the ontological *basis* for the truthmaking of such a modal statement. The resultant (merely) possible state of affairs ("This pen is red") is obtained, as it were, by dissecting the original "formed whole" and reshuffling the constituents, while *respecting* the form of that state of affairs.[14] When we add to this Armstrong's allowing full combinatorial promiscuity, we get his picture of truth-making in a world of states of affairs.

Armstrong's theory is prone to run into certain "technical" difficulties such as the "adicity problem." The idea is the following: Suppose *K* is a dyadic relation. Then, we could legitimately talk about a combinatorial possibility in the form of *Kab*, but not *Ka* or *Kabc*. Of course, Armstrong is well aware of this situation and does not fail to note this sort of restriction both in his earlier work and in *A World of States of Affairs*.[15] Still, it is not clear how Armstrong can simultaneously concede the necessity of such restrictions *and* hold on to the thesis of compossibility. Armstrong maintains that "all the combinations of simple particulars, properties, and relations that *respect the form* of atomic states of affairs constitute the possibilities for first-order states of affairs."[16] But what about the phrase "respecting the form"? This concept appears to be vague and enigmatic, and we cannot find a satisfactory explication of it in Armstrong's treatment of modality. We must note here, in fairness to Armstrong, that he allows exceptions to his liberal combinatorialism when he mentions that some universals may entail or exclude others. The problem, however, is to be able to explain the ontological basis of such constraints and, in particular, of "respecting the form," given the naturalist/combinatorialist framework Armstrong has offered. It is obviously not an entirely satisfactory answer to say that certain combinations are excluded because they do not respect the form of atomic states of affairs for this would merely be attempting to solve a mystery by proposing another, equally problematic one.[17]

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[14] See, for instance, *ibid.*, p. 160.

[15] See his 1989, p. 40, and also Armstrong 1997, pp. 159-160.

[16] Armstrong 1997, p. 160, italics added. See also *ibid.*, p. 170. The same idea can be found in his 1989, p. 48.

The examples that can be put to Armstrong can be multiplied: Why is it that the existent state of affairs "The object *c* is blue all over at time *t*" excludes from the realm of actuality the state of affairs "The object *c* is red all over at time *t*"? It seems fairly clear to me that *a* response to questions of this sort can be found in Armstrong, as I have discussed in my explication of his conception of the "lesser" sorts of states of affairs (i.e., negative, modal, etc.). Yet, it must be admitted that the problems of "respecting the form" spelled out by philosophers like R. Bradley (1992) is apparently left, in the main, unanswered in Armstrong's treatment of the matter. If this is the case, his reductionism (i.e., his attempt to reduce modal concept to nonmodal ones) gets threatened by a problem of circularity.[18] Granting the plausibility and strength of Bradley's opposition summarized above, we can perhaps adopt a somewhat more charitable attitude towards Armstrong's account on modality. I am eager to do so, chiefly because of my sympathy with his naturalism. To recapitulate, for Armstrong "possibility is determined purely by the contingent states of affairs that make up the world."[19] There exist internal relations of identity and difference holding among the constituents of (actual) states of affairs, and this, together with the thesis of independence, provides the metaphysical basis for all possibilities. We may infer from his statements that certain combinations which *fail* to respect the form of atomic states of affairs are reckoned as "impossibilities." Armstrong does not tell us a long story about how such forms are "respected" by the constituents of atomic states of affairs, and also he refrains from postulating the thesis of independence—which is the linchpin of his promiscuous combinatorialism—as an a priori truth. Although these might be viewed as gaps in his account, one must be reminded that they are also indications of his reluctance to offer a complete "armchair description" of the world. One crucial claim of Armstrong that ought to be borne in mind is that a thesis like that of independence of atomic state of affairs cannot be established a priori.[20] Thus, I conclude this section by maintaining that Armstrong's factualism, despite its problems, is a coherent and, one may argue, defensible one within the framework of his *particular program* which aims at explicating the metaphysical structure of the mind-independent reality. As I will explain in the next chapter, there is nevertheless a major issue about propositional truths and truthmakers as conceived by Armstrong.

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[17] It is interesting to note, as an aside, that Armstrong's fascination with ontological forms brings him rather close to Aristotle—recalling especially the Stagirite's debate with the Ancient Atomists. According to atomists, such as Democritus of Abdera, all change is to be explained by the combination and separation of atoms that come in various shapes and sizes. There is no higher (ontological) principle governing the combinations and motion of atoms in void. For Aristotle, however, this is simply unintelligible. How can we explain, he asks, that an acorn—more curiously, *all* acorns—grow to be oak trees if there is not a "principle" in them governing this sort of *kinesis*? Aristotle would, no doubt, be very sympathetic to the Wittgensteinean idea, shared arguably by Armstrong, that possibility of a fact must be written into things themselves.

[18] See Bradley 1992, p. 220.

[19] Armstrong 1997, p. 174.

2.4. Truth-Making at the Basic Level and the Relation of Supervenience

Armstrong employs the notion of supervenience to offer a metaphysical elucidation of how (the existence of) basic or "grounding" entities *of a certain kind* give rise to (the existence of) non-basic entities *of the same kind*. Once we are given the elementary, ultimate states of affairs, we are *ipso facto* given all the negative and modal ones too. Similarly, once we are given the first level truths (such as "*S* is *P*"), we are also given all the higher level or iterated truths (such as "'S is P' is true," "['S is P' is true" is true] is true," etc.). The crux of this argument is, of course, that the mere existence of basic or subvenient elements in these two examples is both necessary and sufficient, from a metaphysical point of view, to get the supervenient ones.

Let us now turn our attention to the metaphysical relation between *truthmakers* and *truths*. Armstrong claims that there is an *internal relation* between a truth and that which makes it true in reality. For Armstrong, " a relation is internal to its terms if and only if it is impossible that the terms should exist and the relation not exist."[21] Put in a different way, truthmakers *entail* truths. Given the actual state of affairs *S*, which is non-mereologically constituted by the property *P* and particular *a*, the truth of the proposition *Pa* obtains necessarily. Hence it seems that Armstrong advocates the use of supervenience for the relation between basic and non-basic entities (facts, truths, etc.) on the one hand, and the term 'internal relation' and the notion of "entailment" for the metaphysical connection envisaged between truths and their pertinent truthmakers on the other.

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[20] *Ibid.*, p. 146.

This last statement should give us a pause. It now seems not only that the supervenience relation alleged to take place between the basic and non-basic entities of a given type is actually an internal relation but also that the relation of truth-making, which is by definition an internal one, is in fact tantamount to that between a subvenient entity and another entity that supervenes on that "basic" ontological ground. To see this: *the modal and negative states of affairs*, as discussed above, is internally related to the basic (actual) states of affairs in such a way that the former is necessitated or entailed by the latter—and, we can add, the former supervenes on the latter. In a perfectly similar fashion, *truths* are internally related to their truthmakers (viz., actual states of affairs) in such a way that the former is necessitated or entailed by the latter—and the former supervenes on the latter. Furthermore, in both cases there is no addition of being: the modal states of affairs are, ontologically speaking, nothing more than simple, positive states of affairs; and truths do not add anything to their "makers" which are, once again, the simple, basic states of affairs. The conclusion is straightforward: basic states of affairs make *all other kinds of states of affairs* and *the basic (first level) truths* out of metaphysical necessity. Both cases involve ontological necessitation, entailment, supervenience, and internal relations.[22] Armstrong somehow obscures this fact since he never explicitly says that truths supervene on truthmakers. Nonetheless, a careful reading of the text reveals that his arguments obviously take him in that direction. For instance, he says: "An important case for us that falls under [the definitions of supervenience] is that of *internal relations*." And later in the book he remarks:

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[21] *Ibid.*, p. 12.

[22] See especially *ibid.*, pages: 12, 13, 87, 115, 131, 135.

> In the useful if theoretically misleading terminology of possible worlds, if a certain truthmaker makes a certain truth true, then there is no alternative world where that truthmaker exists but the truth is a false proposition.[23]

But this description is identical with one of the definitions he has given for the relation of supervenience in the beginning of the book.[24] Therefore, it is clear that the relation between a truthmaker and its truth is, for Armstrong, is not just an internal one; actually, it is *specifically* that of supervenience. This point will prove significant when we come to discuss metaphysical and alethic realisms.

2.5. First-Class and Second-Class Truth-Makers

We have seen that according to Armstrong the actual (basic) states of affairs—that is, particulars with properties and connected through relations—make *all* propositional truths by way of supervenience. But what kind of explication do we get from Armstrong's theory with regards to the structure and nature of our mundane truths and (phenomenal) states of affairs? In order to find an answer to this question, we have to look at a crucial distinction Armstrong makes in his book: predicates and properties. It is a common fact that we employ in everyday language and scientific discourse numerous predicates reflecting our perception and conception of the phenomenal world. One immediate example is the color terms. Armstrong claims, in a reductivist and physicalist spirit, that even though we are often tempted to treat the color terms as genuine properties belonging to ontology we must resist that temptation and try to give an account of those properties in more basic, physical terms (i.e., in terms of wavelengths, laws of reflection, etc.).[25] Colors, then, turn out to be complex physical properties instead of being genuine autonomous ones.

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[23] *Ibid.*, p. 115.

[24] *Ibid.*, p. 11.

Armstrong fleshes out this physicalistic intuition by distinguishing between the first-class and second-class properties. The former are alleged to be the genuine properties and, as such, they are found among the "real furniture" of ontology independently of our ways of predication or conceptualization. One may feel that the physicalist's favorite properties like mass and charge are most likely to fill the bill, but Armstrong is careful to point out that the exact identity or nature of those properties is an *a posteriori* matter to be investigated by natural sciences.[26] In the light of such a reductionism it becomes clear that there is no one-to-one relation between properties and predicates. Any given property may have none, one, or many predicate(s) corresponding to it and *vice versa*. For example, "gravitational rest mass" and "inertial rest mass" are two predicates for one and the same property. And we can plausibly suppose that there are certain properties in the universe for which human cognizers do not yet have corresponding predicates in their linguistic systems.[27]

A property is a *second-class property* if and only if the following holds: although it is not a universal, "when truly predicated of a particular, the resultant truth is a contingent one."[28] Let us try to clarify what Armstrong has in mind here. At the most basic level of ontology we have first-class particulars and first-class universals (that is, properties and relations) all of which are to be identified and studied by empirical sciences. Despite the fact that they are the ultimate furniture of reality or existence they may turn out to be complex entities.[29] By the same token, the first-class universals are the constituents of ultimate truthmakers, to wit, the first-class states of affairs. A first-class atomic state of affairs is composed (as a non-mereological whole) of a first-class particular and one or more first-class universals. The world is *really* the totality of such (actual) states of affairs. The critical part of Armstrong's claim is that we do not, and may never, know what they are and how they are constituted. What *is* being revealed to our experience or cognition, the argument goes, are the second-class of properties, relations, and states of affairs. Colors, to give an example, are second-class properties and, therefore, properly speaking they are not universals. Similarly, a cat's being black is a second-class state of affairs. The question then arises as to, first, the ontological status of the second-class properties, particulars and states of affairs and, second, the metaphysical connection or bridge between them and the real universals and states of affairs.

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[25] *Ibid.*, pp. 57-61.
[26] See, e.g., *ibid.*, p. 25, p. 43, and p. 46.
[27] *Ibid.*, p. 26.
[28] *Ibid.*, p. 44.
[29] For example, a property may be *structural* in its being composed of a property and a relation. Armstrong allows the possibility that all universals are complex in this way. See *ibid.*, pp. 32-33.

Take the second question first. Armstrong contends that the required bridge is provided by the relation of supervenience. The thesis is that

> [g]iven all the first-class states of affairs, all the second-class states of affairs supervene, are entailed, are necessitated. This will involve the supervenience of all second-class properties that can be truly predicated.[30]

If we adopt supervenience, we thereby admit that there may be no difference at the level of the supervenient (second-class) entities without some difference at the subvenient level, i.e., the level of first-class entities. This is the ontological bridge needed between the first-class and the second-class properties, particulars, and states of affairs. When we form true sentences of the form "*S* is *P*" in a given language, the ground for our alethic success lies in the way the first-class states of affairs are formed or structured. The predicate term of such a sentence truthfully attaches to its subject term mainly because of the "combinatorial behavior" of the first-class particulars and properties. For Armstrong, it is those first-class constituents which render, affect, and sustain the supervenient (second-class) states of affairs or truthmakers.[31]

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[30] *Ibid.*, p. 45.
[31] *Ibid.*, pp. 44-45.

Now we can consider the question about the metaphysical character of the second-class properties and states of affairs. Armstrong has already argued that whatever supervenes is no ontological addition to the subvenient entity. This seems, on the face of it, like a denial of the *reality* of the second-class entities. Curiously, however, Armstrong is *not* willing to say either that they do not exist,[32] or that they are unreal.[33] I think this is because Armstrong realizes, notwithstanding his firm conviction that truth-making *in situ* takes place at the most basic ontological level, that it is an exceedingly implausible and untenable move to claim that truths are made only at that first (subvenient) level or that our "homely" truths are mere fictions or linguistic creations having nothing to do with the "real" truth-making relations engendered by the first-class entities. Armstrong concedes, therefore, that our "phenomenal" truths cannot possibly be unreal in an ontologically pejorative sense of the term. Actually, from an epistemological point of view, the second-class states of affairs are more real to us; they are what we come into cognitive contact in our exchange with the environment. In what Armstrong calls "the order of being," however, they are secondary or lesser things.[34]

If this account is correct, then there is no way we can semantically "descend" from the second-class properties to the first-class ones.[35] Universals are not meant to "give semantic values to general words and phrases."[36] Their function is a metaphysical one, in the proper sense of the term. We need universals, for example, in order to account for the resemblances of the objects we observe around us.[37] (Hence, it makes sense for Armstrong to claim that metaphysics can be done *a priori*, while the empirical sciences still have the responsibility of finding out and studying the ultimate elements of existence.)

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[32] *Ibid.*, p. 44.

[33] Armstrong believes, for instance, that the second-class properties *can* "bestow causal efficacy on the particulars that they are properties of. . . ." (*ibid.*, p. 45)

[34] *Ibid.*, pp. 45-46.

[35] Wittgenstein's attempt in the *Tractatus*, as Armstrong correctly points out (p. 45), was bound to fail. No such archeology is possible from the ground level of semantics into the buried fortunes of ontology.

[36] *Ibid.*, p. 25.

[37] Armstrong gives a detailed defense of why we need universals—understood realistically—in *Nominalism and Realism* (1978). (Let us remember that Russell thought we would need at least one universal, viz., resemblance.)

2.6. Truth-Making According to a Metaphysician

There is, generally speaking, an obvious but significant difference between the ways epistemologists and metaphysicians approach the issues about the nature of truth. A quick survey through the literature will indicate that one ubiquitous and irreducible philosophical concern or goal for most (analytic) theoreticians of *episteme* is to give a defensible philosophical account of human cognizers' ability to establish successful connections to the world or, more succinctly, of "getting things right." This inevitably requires coming to grips with the concept of propositional truth.[38] Of course, the fact that theorists of *knowledge* typically show some interest in the nature of truth does not necessarily mean that they are often prone to conflate the matters concerning our mental states and propositional truth. The majority of analytic philosophers dealing with truth tend, as a matter of fact, to embrace alethic realism, thus denying that truth is intrinsically related to our doxastic states. However, they usually do retain some notion of truth which typically requires or involves an in-depth discussion and evaluation of some of our most central semantic and linguistic concepts such as reference, denotation, proposition, scheme, and so on. Consequently, most analytic philosophers (as well as the ordinary speakers of the English language) somehow distinguish the "ontological status" associated with the *actual states of affairs* or external circumstances which are thought to take place in the world, from the ontological status attributed to *propositional truths*. For instance, we may wonder if a particular statement made by an eye-witness in the court room is *true*, and we may want to know if her statements accord with *facts*. Liars fail to tell *truths*; their statements fail to reflect (veridically) *what happens in the world*. We often take scientists' claims as expressing *truths*, especially in those cases where we do not have the requisite background to grasp certain esoteric *facts* pertaining to a particular field of science. In short, the distinction between states of affairs (truthmakers) and propositional truths is reasonably clear for the majority of philosophers as well as for the speakers of those languages that contain the "truth predicate."

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[38] The list of philosophers with such concerns would, of course, be very long. But for the sake of giving a few examples: see Almeder (1992), Alston (1996), BonJour (1985), Davidson (1995; 1990), Devitt (1991), Goldman (1986; 1994), Lynch (1998), Popper (1965), Putnam (1986; 1990). Excellent surveys of the *theories of truth* (where 'truth' is understood essentially as a semantic notion) have been given by David (1994), Kirkham (1992), O'Connor (1975), Schmitt (1995), and Walker (1989).

My discussion of Armstrong's theory of truth-making must leave us with the suspicion that his peculiar alethic picture is remarkably dissimilar to the "common conception" of truth described above.[39] Since Armstrong is no lover of propositions,[40] he apparently has, one may say, theoretical difficulties due to being deprived of such intermediaries which many analytic philosophers cheerfully use as a "buffer zone" between epistemology and ontology. The matter about propositions aside, the real issue that must be addressed in this context is the nature of generation of the mundane or phenomenal truths in the light of the salient impossibility of a semantic descent from the second-class to first-class states of affairs and properties.

Let us note that Armstrong does not elaborate on his understanding of the character of those *particulars* which are the presumed constituents of the second-class states of affairs. His language indicates some kind of ambiguity and uneasiness in dealing with this matter:

> Second class properties . . . require second-class states of affairs, contingent states of affairs where second-class properties truly attach to particulars (which *may* themselves be in some way second-class).[41]

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[39] In the last chapter I will distinguish different senses of characterizing propositional truth and will point out a more general problem about the extensional approaches to defining such philosophically critical terms as 'is true'. My thesis will essentially be that even if the extensional projects like that of Armstrong can fulfill their theoretical promise, they are bound to fail, properly speaking, in providing *definitions* since they do not deal with the connotative aspects of the matter.

[40] See Armstrong 1997, p. 131.

[41] *Ibid.*, p. 44, emphasis mine.

This is a misleading statement because, in Armstrong's account, second-class properties that truly attach to particulars actually *cannot be other than* second-class ones. Imagine otherwise: if the second-class properties were to attach to first-class particulars, they would become the non-mereological constituents, along with those particulars, of the first-class states of affairs. However, Armstrong denies that our ways of predication (i.e., description of the second-class properties and relations of the world) pertain to the realm of real universals—the first-class properties and relations. To give a simple example, claiming otherwise would amount to maintaining that an electron (supposing that it is a first-class particular) can be yellow. This, of course, makes no sense. Therefore, the second-class properties truly attach to particulars which are themselves *necessarily* second-class.

We obtain the following picture. The second-class universals and particulars are supervenient upon the first-class in the sense that the latter entails or necessitates the former. For Armstrong, this is clarified by stating that the supervenient entities constitute no addition to being, once we are given the respective subvenient entities. These two claims are clearly not equivalent although textual evidence suggests, as I have displayed, that Armstrong thinks otherwise. Consider a second-class states of affairs like John's being six feet tall. Assuming the thesis of physicalism, we can allow that this state of affairs is ontologically *no addition in being* to the first-class particulars, relations, and properties. For instance, John can plausibly be regarded from the analytic—and physicalist—metaphysician's perspective as a corporeal entity described by a hypothetical "completed physical science." Hence I submit that we can sympathize with the reductionistic realist's intuitions when he argues that it is an untenable idea that there is another being, John of our mezzo-universe, *in addition to* a certain assembly of the elementary particles which are brought together in accordance with the laws of (completed) microphysics to give rise to the existence of what we perceive as "John." I am inclined to think that this idea is not entirely problem-free but I will not question it here. What *is* evidently problematic in Armstrong's theory is the account he gives of the relationship between the first-class properties of the in-itself reality and predicates of natural languages—and, in turn, of the connection between the two "classes" of states of affairs. Armstrong is mistaken in believing that we do get phenomenal properties and states of affairs out of the first-class entities by virtue of noumenal relations such as being connected through supervenience, metaphysical necessitation, or entailment. This will, at any rate, be my central ontological argument in the following chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

Metaphysical Realism

3.1. *Tractarian Factualism As a Form of Realism*

According to the sort of factualism defended by Armstrong, actual states of affairs and truths entailed by them would be part of ontology even though the world were uninhabited by cognitive agents who could bear witness to the presence of those states of affairs. So far as an ontological project like Armstrong's is concerned, the question of our conceptual or epistemic access to the facts of the world is not a relevant issue. In other words, the philosopher dealing with the task characterized in the preceding chapter is responsible only for offering a theory of how reality is constructed metaphysically but *not*, for instance, how we can get knowledge of that ontological structure or what conceptual tools would be more suitable for its accurate representation. I will call this view, which is a combination of metaphysical realism and metaphysical factualism, *Tractarian Realism* (TR).[1] As I have discussed, factualism—broadly construed—has its philosophical attractions as it apparently can handle certain problems that thingism can not. In the past, however, TR has encountered serious attacks from philosophers less realistically inclined. One classical example is the problem articulated by Strawson in his debate with Austin.[2] According to the former, facts are not "in the world" in the way things are. Facts are actually "artifacts" of our language. Being understood in this manner, "it is vacuous to say that a true statement is one that fits the facts . . . ."[3] The underlying idea is that we cannot, as numerous philosophers (including some Logical

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[1] Armstrong (1997, p. 4) uses the term "factualist metaphysics" for the sort of activity he is engaged in. I tendentiously call his position Tractarian Realism for I will tackle the issues pertaining to his thesis on the ontological nature of truthmakers and truths within the framework of my critique of realism.

[2] See Olson 1987, pp. 6-8.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 8.

Positivists) have correctly noted, talk about "facts" independent of our *conceptual schemes*. For example, when we utter an empirical sentence like "There is a car accident on the street" which is assumed to describe the pertinent fact, not only the sentence but the "fact" too should be framed, constructed and understood by the aid of our linguistic tools and communal practices. There can be, in other words, no facts independent of our conceptualization. Quite possibly, a Martian would see, in its peculiar way, the objects that we call a "car" and a "corpse," but it is doubtful that it could see them *as* a "car" and a "corpse"—and the event *as* an "accident"—just like we do. If this is the case, the TRist tradition best represented by the early Wittgenstein is seriously flawed.

Wittgenstein's reputation comes partly from his renunciation of the Tractarian approach to ontology and language in his later works, especially in *Philosophical Investigations*. A considerable number of philosophers today would agree that Wittgenstein indeed captured a serious problem in his early account where both "the world" and our linguistic connection with it had been portrayed in a highly misleading fashion. Despite its widespread recognition now, TRists like Armstrong do not seem be fascinated by the post-later-Wittgensteinean vogue of picturing human cognizers as more or less doomed to socio-linguistic games. As we have seen, Armstrong's ontology in its essence is a frank affirmation of the Tractarian tenet that the ultimate states of affairs or truthmakers *are* embedded in reality and that their existence does not depend on the mental states or linguistic tools of cognitive agents.[4] Accordingly, the fact that a Martian would not see a "car" when he or she looks at what we call a car does *not* support the claim that there is no fact that it is a car independently of our conceptualization. Hence, an TRist would insist that a metaphysical conclusion cannot be drawn from what is essentially an epistemological premise. Such a realist would, moreover, not be greatly impressed by our having to employ a language in dealing with the ontological matters. As P. Moser puts it, "[l]inguistic relativity of the notions and statements of an ontology does not entail linguistic relativity of what those notions are about."[5] I think we must distinguish here two possible senses of "what our sentences are about." If it is intended to mean "mind-independent *reality* itself," the nonrelativity thesis—which then becomes tantamount to MR_{MIN}—would indeed hold, but this is, I believe, a far cry from what the TRist wishes to establish. The more relevant and interesting sense of "what our sentences are about" is related to *facts*. According to this, Moser's statement above can be read by the TRist as saying that although we use language and conceptual schemes to talk about facts, this does not show that those facts themselves are linguistic. From a slightly different perspective, linguistic relativity is detrimental to (or "contaminates") our conceptual schemes, not facts out there.

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[4] And this idea actually reflects a common intuition found among those who can, I guess, be named Natural Born Realists (such as Australians). See Devitt's (1991, p. x) humorous remarks about realism in Australia.

In this chapter I will elaborate on this controversy in order to offer a critique of both the Tractarian realism à la Armstrong and the ideas of Hilary Putnam, an eminent anti-realist philosopher whose influential ideas have become known, rather confusingly, under such rubrics as internal realism and pragmatic realism. As we have seen in the previous chapter, Armstrong's TR is not only a thorough and interesting account of the world as the totality of non-mereologically combined noumenal particulars, relations, and properties, but also a peculiar and challenging theory about the ontological basis of truth-making relations and truths. Now, as I juxtapose these two philosophers for the purposes of a discussion on propositional truth, one may wonder what kind of metaphysical or alethic benefit might accrue from the proposed investigation, given the fact that Armstrong's notion of truth or truth-making is seemingly not even remotely relevant to what may be considered as Putnam's epistemological agenda for the last two decades. Armstrong's entire metaphysical project is motivated by the assumption that ontology has a noumenal structure we can probe philosophically and that the actual states of affairs do have some metaphysical (as opposed to an essentially grammatical, linguistic, communal, etc.) form. This stands in sharp contrast with the Putnamian program according to which the task of deciphering the structure of noumenal states of affairs cannot be taken as serious business. Of course, Putnam is not the only philosopher to dismiss the work of

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[5] Quoted by Lynch (1998, p. 25).

TRists as lacking theoretical sense or import; as a matter of fact, the extent of the philosophical and communicative disparateness I have been hinting at between the TRists and anti-MRists is evinced by the fact that the recent epistemology literature is largely and remarkably uninformed by Armstrong's account of truth-making relations.

To anticipate a bit, I will offer a quasi-realist account of truth and truth-making which aims at circumventing the philosophical difficulties of both camps. It is my conviction that there is an important truth *not only* in the realist claims that there is a mind-independent, language-independent, in-itself reality which is the ultimate ontological basis of what makes our statements true of false, and that the properties and relations given to our perception are somehow connected to that reality, *but also* in the anti-realist idea that we must disabuse ourselves of the alethic potential or significance that the realists attaches to the hypothesized noumenal entities. Let me now turn to the anti-realist side of the debate.

3.2. Putnam's Internal Realism

Despite the widespread recognition and intuitive appeal of metaphysical realism, a counter-movement emerged in the past century due to works of thinkers like the later Wittgenstein, Goodman, Quine, Rorty, and Putnam. The common denominator of the anti-realist opposition (though not all of them discussed the issue within the confines of this terminology) is that there is no language-independent way of talking about parts or aspects of reality. While the ideas of each of the above-mentioned philosophers deserve to be treated separately and be subjected to critical examination, I will be focusing, for the purposes of this study, mainly upon one of them. It is my conviction that any philosophical project dealing with the realism-antirealism issue in epistemology has to come to grips with the ideas of H. Putnam. His interesting epistemo-ontological journey gradually took him from being a loyalist to (in M. Devitt's words) a renegade, and then to what I regard to be an "ambiguous realist" or, more accurately, an "ambiguous anti-realist."[6] Although Putnam did not seem to be willing to give up the title "realism" for the theory he fully articulated and defended in *Reason, Truth, and History*—a theory which has been in circulation in continually altering forms for about twenty five years now—the loyal camp has unabatedly and persistently voiced their misgivings about his peculiar realism. Since the theory I am developing in this study will have certain resemblances with, as well as its differences from, Putnam's internal or pragmatic realism, I will devote this section to an overview of his ideas.

Putnam's epistemo-ontological account is informed by an understanding that emphasizes the centrality of our actual epistemic practices and the common sense view of human knowledge as well as avoiding the excessive claims of traditional (alethic and metaphysical) realism and anti-realism. Hence, despite the fact that Putnam's theory *is* (allegedly) a form of realism, he believes that it comes "with a human face." The crucial reference here is to Kant. As Simon Blackburn observes,

> [d]octrines combining something called "realism" with what then seems like a qualification—internal, perspectival, modest, immanent, anthropocentric, minimal—have been in the air for a long time. Kant is their forefather, although Descartes might also be mentioned.[7]

It was Kant who made a Copernican revolution in epistemology and ontology when he suggested that the objects given to human cognition have to conform—*if* they are to be objects in this sense—to the constitution of our cognitive faculties, rather than vice versa.[8] Consequently, the very nature of "objecthood" precludes the possibility of our knowing objects independently of our mental capacities of perceiving, understanding, and so on. In this context, the negative claim about "objecthood" amounts to Kant's refusal of metaphysical realism; and the legitimization of the entities given to our cognitive mechanism as the true objects of human knowledge is his positive claim, viz., empirical realism. Putnam thinks that he has revived this important distinction and followed Kant's lead in order to endorse an internal or pragmatic realism.[9]

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[6] Putnam's realism surfaces most prominently in his debates with R. Rorty. See, e.g., Putnam 1994a, Chapter 15.

[7] Blackburn 1994, p. 12.

[8] *Critique of Pure Reason*, Bxvi-xvii.

Before broaching this matter, it may be useful to take a glance at the history of the transformation Putnam's thoughts have gone through. During his realist years, that is, roughly until his 1976 Presidential address at the Eastern Division of the American Philosophical Association, Putnam defended—mainly because of a lack of alternative, as he puts it—the idea that the objects to which our words correspond are fixed by determined relations of reference independently of our conceptual schemes. In "Models and Reality," however, he identified a problem about this sort of realism. The linchpin of Putnam's anti-realist turn was the contention that

> no matter what the operational and theoretical constraints our practice may impose on our use of language, there are always *infinitely many different reference relations* (different 'satisfaction relations', in the sense of formal semantics, or different *correspondences*) which satisfy all of the constraints.[10]

If this is the case, there exist in fact no metaphysically privileged correspondences between objects and words. According to this "model-theoretic" argument, then, there is something very dubious about the idea that the external world or nature "interprets our words for us" and "determines what our words stand for."[11] Putnam thought that the externalist perspective hinged upon a "magical" theory of reference where objects get singled out as fixed entities in the material world, and our words are brought into one to one correspondence with those objects irrespective of the language or conceptual scheme chosen to describe them. Dwelling on this problem, Putnam gradually developed an internalist (or Kantian) alternative to this kind of externalism according to which it makes absolutely no sense to talk about objects determining their own ontological status in the absence of minds perceiving and conceptualizing them as such. He summarizes this whole notion neatly by saying: "the universe is not a furnished home."[12] Putnam's philosophical goal in that period was actually not to provide a metaphysical "counter-thesis" to the realist position but to show, via some sort of reductio, that it failed to convey an intelligible content.[13] The main theme here, which Putnam explores and builds further in his later writings, is that if we hold on to strict physicalism, we are inevitably led to the absurd view that something outside the minds and in the material world singles out certain reference relations as the "correct" ones. But, the argument goes, the world stripped of non-physical elements can obviously perform no such task. Even with respect to an ideal theory that describes the external reality perfectly, the reference relation would not be unique and, therefore, we would get more than one correspondence between a given symbol in language and that part of reality it is intended to refer to.

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[9] Putnam 1983, p. 85.

[10] *Ibid.*, p. ix.

[11] Putnam 1994c, p. 460 and Putnam 1993, p. xii.

In *Reason, Truth and History*, Putnam presents us with a more detailed critique of physicalism and offers an alternative to externalism, paving the way for his particular brand of alethic account. He portrays "metaphysical realism" as a thesis both about the *objects* of the world and about the *truth* of our statements. Let me reproduce his famous description once again:

> On this perspective, the world consists of some fixed totality of mind-independent objects. There is exactly one true and complete description of 'the way the world is'. Truth involves some sort of correspondence relation between words or thought-signs and external things and sets of things.[14]

Putnam contrasts this externalist view—which tends to give an account of the epistemo-ontological realm from a God's Eye point of view—with his *internal realism* according to which

> a statement is true just in case a competent speaker fully acquainted with the use of the words would be fully rationally warranted in using those words to

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[12] Putnam 1983, p. 23.
[13] Putnam 1994a, p. 303.
[14] Putnam 1986, p. 49.

> make the assertion in question, provided she or he were in a sufficiently good epistemic position.[15]

Truths can only be internal to our theories and conceptual schemes rather than being independent of the conceptualization of human agents. Still, truth is different from "what is justified epistemically" or "what is rational to accept by the actual cognizers." This is because while one may have perfectly rational or justifiable grounds to believe a statement, that statement may yet turn out to be a false one. Rather, Putnam identifies truth with *idealized* rational acceptability, meaning that it is what rational people would accept if the (epistemic) conditions were ideal.[16] And this last point places him in contrast with pragmatist philosophers (e.g., Rorty) and makes him, we are told, a realist rather than an anti-realist.

One consequence of equating truth with idealized rational acceptability or justification under ideal epistemic conditions is that we deny an epistemological or semantic ridge between the truth conditions and assertability conditions of our statements.[17] Hence, even though truth is certainly different from epistemic justification, it is *not* the case that the first pertains to a mind-independent, noumenal reality and the second to our doxastic and epistemic practices and the evidential relations among propositions. In "A Defense of Internal Realism" (1990) Putnam employs the term "being right" to distinguish his understanding of truth from that of the metaphysical realist. The reason for such a move is, of course, to stress the close connection between what human agents ordinarily regard as veridical success and the evidential means that are available to them in supporting the empirical statements.

The above discussion also relates to Putnam's refusal of the classical correspondence theory of truth and the metaphysical picture associated with it. Accordingly, what the externalist misses is the fact that we do not have any understanding of the alleged relation between the mind-independent in-itself reality and our statements. This suggests that there is something fundamentally wrong about the way the externalist conceives of the basic furniture of reality:

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[15] Putnam 1994b, p. 242.
[16] Putnam 1986, p. 55.
[17] Putnam 1987, pp. 30-31; 1994a, p. 265.

> 'Objects' do not exist independently of conceptual schemes. *We* cut up the world into objects when we introduce one or another scheme of description. Since the objects *and* the signs are alike *internal* to the scheme of description, it is possible to say what matches what.[18]

Once again, we sense a strong Kantian flavor in Putnam's account: objects of *our* world are not (and cannot be) mind-independent entities. The externalist view is flawed in that it ignores the contribution of our concepts in the "making" of the objects of our world. This is of course *not* to say that those objects are generated by individual mental states at our own will; it is, after all, a distinction Kant recognizes that the things we experience in hallucinations and dreams are not objectively existent the way spatio-temporal entities are. Hence, the point to be made by the internalist is that objects cannot be envisaged and grasped outside the framework of particular conceptual schemes. Along similar lines, the correspondence theory of truth which is purported to describe a relation *in* the external reality regardless of our ideas and theories about it actually fails to be of philosophical interest since it misses an important fact about such relations: there are "too many correspondences" between our symbols and the other sorts of entities and, consequently, it is highly misleading to pick one of them and present as *the* correspondence relation in a given particular context. The mind-independent reality does not single out and present to us one among many relations; we do it within conceptual schemes with particular intentions in our minds.[19]

As I have remarked in the beginning of this section, Putnam later jettisoned certain parts of his internal realism. First of all, he realized that defining the truth of a statement in close connection with the notion of "warrant to assert it in sufficiently good epistemic conditions" was highly problematic. Such conditions, Putnam tells us in a later work,[20] are supposed to be the ones under which we can tell if a particular statement is *true or false*. But then the proposed definition fails to reduce truth to a different semantic or epistemic concept because Putnam evidently circles back to the term 'true' in explicating that definition. As a result, the "moderate verificationist" side of his internal realism drops from the picture. And this means giving up the idea that "truth could never be verification-transcendent."[21]

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[18] Putnam 1986, p. 52.

[19] *Ibid.*, pp. 72-73; see also Putnam 1982, pp. 142-143.

Furthermore, Putnam gradually moved away from (certain aspects of) James's philosophy and got closer to the realist tenet that "the world is as it is independently of the interests of describers."[22] This is indeed a remarkable concession to the metaphysical realist:

> what the traditional realist is pointing out is that when I talk about anything that is not causally effected by my own interests—say, when I point out that there are millions of species of ants in the world—I can also say that the world would be the same in that respect even if I did not have those interests, had not given that description, etc. And with all that I agree.[23]

While there is little doubt that these statements are to get a nod from the knowing realist, it is nonetheless important to note at this point what Putnam is *retaining* about his internal realism or anti-realism. One question Putnam never gives up asking is "*from whose point of view is the story being told?*"[24] As one can notice easily, this is a worry voiced in connection with the following two externalist (or objectivist) assumptions:

> (1) the assumption that there is a clear distinction to be drawn between the properties things have 'in themselves' and the properties which are projected by us and (2) the assumption that the fundamental science—in the singular, since only physics has that status today—tells us what properties things have 'in themselves.'[25]

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[20] Putnam 1994b, pp. 242-243.

[21] *Ibid.*, p. 243.

[22] Putnam 1994c, p. 448.

[23] See *ibid.*, fn. 7, p. 448.

[24] Putnam 1986, p. 50.

[25] Putnam 1987, p. 13.

Despite various alterations in Putnam's ideas since the late 70's, he never wavered in his renunciation of the notion of thing-in-itself and noumenal properties. While Kant thinks that noumena are forever opaque to human mind and knowledge, Putnam maintains that "we don't know what we are talking about when we talk about 'things in themselves'."[26] As indicated before, Putnam constantly reminds us that it is human cognizers who divide the world into objects, properties, relations, states of affairs, etc., and that it makes no sense to think that world divides itself up into fixed objects or structured states of affairs. However, he is careful in reminding the reader that mountains, cats, and chairs are not creations of mind and language. That is why in his later phase Putnam comes to regard Dummett an "anti-realist" (due to his objection to the concept of nonepistemic truth) and Goodman an "irrealist" (as he flatly opposes the modest claims of MR_{MIN}).[27] Another interesting contrast can be drawn between the relatively realist attitude Putnam has been exhibiting for the last ten years and the ideas of Rorty who advocates a kind of anti-realism which the former finds untenable. Putnam describes Rorty's main worry as follows: "How can one say that sentences are 'made true' by objects if objects aren't 'what they are independent of my way of talking'?[28] Putnam's response is that *given our language* it is a perfectly reasonable claim that the sky would be blue even if we lacked color terms in English. Thus Rorty actually tends toward some kind of solipsism (with a "we") as he fails to recognize independence of truth *in this sense*. Putnam agrees with Rorty that there are indefinitely many ways of describing the world and that none of them can be reckoned as "the Nature's own way."[29] Nevertheless, contra Rorty, it is the things and states of affairs of/in the "world" as conceptualized by the speakers of a language that make our sentences true or false. From a different viewpoint, the mere fact that a particular picture of representation and truth-making has gone bankrupt does not entail that *all* theories of representation and truth-making have outlived their usefulness and hence we must turn our attention from truth altogether. Putnam summarizes the current state of the debate between him and Rorty as follows:

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[26] *Ibid.*, p. 36.
[27] Putnam 1994c, p. 446.
[28] Putnam 1994a, p. 301.
[29] *Ibid.*, p. 302.

> it seems to me that while I have moved from versions of "internal realism" I put forward after I left physicalism to a position which I would describe as increasingly realist—though without going back to the latter-day version of fourteenth-century semantics known as "metaphysical realism"—Rorty has moved from his physicalism to an extreme linguistic idealism which teeters on the edge of solipsism.[30]

3.3. Lynch's Pluralistic Realism

Michael Lynch has recently defended an epistemo-ontological theory which is an interesting combination of realism about truth and pluralism about the world. The central idea that motivates Lynch's alethic account is that there can be more than one true story (i.e., incompatible, but equally acceptable, accounts) of the world, without implying that every account is true. Briefly put, Lynch aims at showing that, contrary what may first seem, pluralism and objectivity are *not* inconsistent with one another.[31] Quite naturally, such a theory is to upset both the relativist and absolutist camps. According to the former, we actually describe the world in a multitude of ways, employing different theories and schemes. Consequently, it makes little sense to speak of *the* description of reality as the correct way of representing it. If this (postmodern, anti-realist, historicist) viewpoint is granted, one also has to admit that it is "philosophically naive" to talk of objective truth. On the other hand, according to the traditional realist perspective, it *is* a fact that there is objective truth. Then it naturally follows, for that kind of realist, there is one true account of the world.

Lynch appropriates an important distinction introduced to the literature by H. Price.[32] *Vertical pluralism* is the view that there are many types of facts in the world and that one type is not ontologically primary or more fundamental than the other. To put it differently, facts about, for instance, morality or mind cannot be reduced to more physical or observational ones. *Horizontal pluralism* comes with a rather different claim, namely that within a particular level of discourse, there may be facts incompatible with one another. This latter kind of pluralism is the relevant one when philosophers talk about conceptual schemes and worldviews, and it is the one Lynch attempts to promote in his book.

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[30] *Ibid.*, p. 306.
[31] Lynch 1998, pp. 1-3.
[32] *Ibid.*, p. 6.

Lynch calls his view *relativistic Kantianism*—a name which immediately brings to mind Putnam's internal or pragmatic realism. However, there are important differences between the theories of these philosophers. Putnam, in his internalist period, wanted to be a pluralist (or relativist) and at the same time to jettison the realist notion of truth, believing that the two are incompatible. Although Putnam has changed his mind on this matter and tended towards a more realist interpretation, he insists that our conception of truth cannot be wholly divorced our means of justification. Lynch, however, is more inclined to dispense with the verificationist elements in his theorization. Moreover, while Putnam tries to get rid of the in-itself reality, Lynch, following the lead of Kant, embraces the notion of things-in-themselves[33]—though he is not sufficiently clear on the details of his understanding of the noumenal entities.

According to Lynch, "absolutism" can be either about facts or contents of propositions (or other kinds of truth-bearers). "*Content absolutism* is the view that what we say or think on some occasion—the proposition we express—is not relative to any worldview, perspective, or conceptual scheme."[34] There is an absolute description or representation of the world whether we do/will/can have epistemic access to that description. This sort of absolutism makes the truth conditions external to schemes or worldviews of the cognitive agents. In a similar vein, *fact absolutism* takes facts as external to human conceptualization and perspectives. The resultant picture is that "there can be one and only one totality of facts; there is one and only one way the world is."[35]

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[33] *Ibid.*, p. 152.
[34] *Ibid.*, p. 14.
[35] *Ibid.*, p. 15.

The mirror image definitions for "pluralism" can be given as follows. *Content relativism* makes the truth of a proposition internal to some conceptual scheme. Hence, truth conditions are formed and determined within particular conceptual schemes, never outside of them. *Fact relativism*, similarly, renders facts internal to worldviews and human perspectives. Accordingly, it is unintelligible to speak of facts in the absence of cognizers and languages. Lynch claims not only that fact relativism implies content relativism but, more critically, that the entailment works in the other direction too.

Lynch, thus, defends relativism with respect to content and fact, while *denying both* that there is no in-itself reality *and* that the truth is an epistemic matter. I will come back to the Kantian relativism Lynch defends later in this study.

3.4. An Objection To TR

Despite their important differences, Putnam and Lynch share a common epistemo-ontological ground vis-à-vis their opposition to Tractarian realism characterized in the previous chapter. As we have seen, both philosophers conceive facts as *internal* to conceptual schemes. Consequently, a world without languages would not contain any "facts" as we normally understand the term. Anti-realist philosophers commonly respond to the TRist by drawing our attention to the way sentences in a language get interpreted and also to the underlying assumptions of the realist position. The spirit of this anti-realist opposition can be expressed (à la Putnam) by saying: "the world does not interpret sentences for us."[36] Accordingly, there is no level of facts where the truth conditions of our statements are set forth independently of language and our ways of identifying the truthmakers or "facts." Since such identification is necessarily to involve a variety of linguistic tools that we possess, we could not possibly conceptualize a single fact (or construct a metaphysical theory) that is not "contaminated" by those tools of discourse.

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[36] *Ibid.*, p. 27.

This is not to make the trivial point that we have to use a language to talk about facts but, more critically, to imply that the moment the realist pretends to treat a "fact" as a nonlinguistic and nonconceptual entity "out there," he has already used *a particular set of* concepts, rules, and schemes in order to make some sense of that fact and thus has already dressed it up, so to speak, in his own native language.

It is important to see how Armstrong's realism stands in stark contrast with the Putnamian anti-realism discussed in this chapter. Armstrong's thick particulars, for instance, are to be found in a reality independent of minds and languages. Propositional truth, on the other hand, is established by virtue of some sort of correspondence between the external states of affairs embedded in reality and our truth-bearers. The objects and properties we ordinarily refer to by means of symbols do *not* come into being solely in the presence of, or simply due to, conceptual schemes; rather, those objects and properties are the ultimate furniture of reality which is mostly indifferent to our ways of conceptualizing and theorizing. Both content relativism and fact relativism are, therefore, philosophically mistaken theses. This line of argument may accord well, I submit, with our common sense. Yet, from an anti-realist perspective, it begs the question. To put it differently, the realist cannot make her case a strong one by insisting that the relativity of languages and concepts does not imply the relativity of what those languages and concepts are about. If there is an ontological problem about moving from the relativity of our linguistic tools to the relativity of facts, there is also an equally serious issue related to treating the facts given to our cognitive mechanism as entities which can be presumed to reside in a mind-independent ontology independently of our ways of conceptualization. In other words, the (absolutist) realist cannot, it seems, justify the claim that her discourse about the facts is veridical, accurate, or reliable enough to keep finite beings such as ourselves is touch with *the* facts. As Putnam and Lynch would maintain, what the absolutist misses is the "fact" that there are *no facts* in reality to direct, guide, and determine the correct conceptualization and accurate representation of facts. Such determinations can take place only within the existent borders of languages and schemes that human agents collectively create and "live in." This means that a purely extensional approach to facts is bound to fail from a philosophical point of view: when it attempts to reach the "external" facts, it unavoidably employs some kind of interpretation. But this interpretation cannot plausibly be reckoned as "pertaining to things themselves" because "there are no scheme-independent facts that determine interpretations."[37] As Putnam would have it, the world *per se* does not usher us into finding the right way to talk about facts. Our understanding of a fact is inevitably formed and shaped by our language and a worldview. And the absolutist too, regrettably, must use limited conceptual tools and ways of "seeing reality." In Putnam's words, "elements of what we call 'language' or 'mind' *penetrate so deeply into what we call 'reality' that the very project of representing ourselves as being 'mappers' of something 'language-independent' is fatally compromised from the very start.*"[38]

A TRist may persist and pose the following challenge: If this particular *object* found in my garden which perfectly looks like a red rose to me and to many other reliable fellow humans is not a creation of minds or language, why not admit the *fact* that there is a red rose out there? The sort of anti-realist response I sympathize with would be that there is seemingly no direct and unproblematic ontological route from the highly plausible thesis of ontological realism (i.e., MR_{MIN}) to a Tractarian kind of factualism. Elaborating the same example, a physicist, a bee, and a cognitive agent whose visual perception are vastly superior to normal humans would all experience or encounter, as we can imagine, different "facts" pertaining to that object.[39] Which one is *the* fact about the rose? As should be clear so far, the TRist typically asserts or supposes that there is actually no problem of alternative conceptual schemes or languages. The underlying assumption here is that the metaphysician, in spite of using a language and a set of concepts, *is* somehow able to talk about the facts embedded in the mind-independent reality. When the TRist is pressed on the issue of the linguistic tools he constantly employs in his ontological constructs, he can go either of the three ways:

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[37] *Ibid.*, p. 26.

[38] Putnam 1990, p. 28. Italics are in the original.

[39] About the bee: We must yet keep in mind the Wittgensteinean thought that "if a lion could talk, we could not understand him" (1958, p. 223).

(1) The TRist may argue that since the rationality, conceptual/linguistic means, logic and science of the Western world has the promise of offering a much better (i.e., more accurate) picture of the world, *our* way of conceiving and cataloging the facts is the correct one and, thus, we, but not the members of other—actual or possible—cultures and species, have a superior and veridical understanding of the existing states of affairs. If this is true, we are privileged in coming to direct (cognitive or otherwise) contact with the facts of reality. Needless to say, one philosophical landmark of the last century has been the notion that such reasoning is rather problematic. Conceding this point, however, does not entail that Western languages, science and technology are on a par with, for instance, the myths and rituals of "pre-scientific cultures"—though there is no apparent reason why they cannot be superior to ours in certain other respects. To give a trite example, it has been the Western mind, not the others, that managed to make computers and to realize the seemingly impossible dream of walking on the moon. The point to be made in this context is rather that it is not an incontrovertible claim that our highly successful science and technology is a firm indication of the correctness of the above-described realist position regarding facts. There is an important and subtle issue here related to philosophy of science, but I will not get into it in the present work.

(2) The realist might want to refrain from the claim that there is a single fact about, say, a red rose. Rather, he can maintain that different facts related to different aspects of the object coexist in reality. Accordingly, a physicist, a poet, an extra-terrestrial (or, remembering Lynch's distinction between horizontal and vertical pluralism, people from different cultures or worldviews) may capture different facts about an object in the space-time continuum. And all those sorts of facts can be reckoned as belonging to the mind-independent reality without one or some of them having ontological primacy over others.

Nevertheless, it is conspicuous that worldviews, conceptual schemes, and scientific theories are *our* creations and, in this sense, their "being" at a certain point in time is totally *contingent*. This means that a certain aspect/part of reality here and now *could have been* represented in fundamentally different ways by different people employing different schemes and theories. Then, it must have been the case that thousands of years ago certain facts (about viruses, electrons, planetary orbits, etc.) were continuously taking place around (and unbeknownst to) those people. In an inductive spirit, we may as well infer that the same must be happening to us at the present. The upshot of all this is, of course, a rather problematic inflation of the ontology on the side of the realist. Given that an object like a red rose does (presumably) not alter its nature as we impose our scientific theories, world views, and different perspectives on it, the TRist is compelled to draw the conclusion that all such "facts" that *can* be attributed to it—including those facts that will be discovered and spelled out only in the future, and those that will never be known to us—must inhere in it; their number may even be infinite. This leaves the realist with an insurmountable difficulty because now he has to reconcile the idea of a stable and concept-independent reality with that of infinitely many states of affairs which are, have been, will be, and could have been generated by cognitive agents and their powers of conceptualization and which, *at the same time*, pertain to *that concept-independent reality*. I believe that this picture seriously lacks credibility.[40] Furthermore, although we generally *do* have a sound understanding of the existence of objects, most of us would hesitate to say that we understand the *real* or *actual existence* of a plethora of "facts" (to be described by actual and possible conceptual schemes) which occupy the same spatio-temporality.

(3) Finally, I come to what I take to be the most promising construal of TR. The realist may argue that it is *not* among his responsibilities to identify and display the individual states of affairs that actually exist in reality. It is, the argument goes, altogether a different matter (arguably an empirical one) to find out what fills the ontological bill.

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[40] The kind of conflict I perceive here is not about the facts themselves but rather about two "pictures" the TRist seems to subscribe to simultaneously in (2): one that depicts a reality whose structure is unaffected by our powers and tools of conceptualization and another one according to which each and every (actual and possible) state of affairs has its place in that reality. The problem is due to the fact that the sort of TRist I consider in (2) *does* admit that all states of affairs are inherently and inevitably conceptual.

Obviously, this is the route taken by Wittgenstein and Armstrong.[41] The latter of these philosophers spells out this idea by distinguishing between the first and second-class properties and states of affairs, and claims that the relation between the two is strict (ontological) supervenience. But this view now seems rather suspicious in light of our discussion thus far.

3.5. A Question Concerning Armstrong's First and Second Class Entities

There are two principal aspects of the conflict between Putnam's "realism" and Armstrong's TR. First, according to Putnam there are no in-itself entities (such as noumenal objects, properties, relations, and states of affairs). Second, since truths are "made" within languages or conceptual schemes, Putnam firmly believes that it is unintelligible to talk about truths existing in the absence of such conceptual tools or media. In this section, I want to return to Armstrong's understanding of the distinction between the first and second class entities and to evaluate it from a Putnamian standpoint. In the next, I will offer a critique of his anti-realist metaphysics.

Putnam says that he is actually sympathetic to the idea that there *is* a relation of supervenience between the non-intensional facts (i.e., what Simon Blackburn calls the "base totality") and the semantic or intensional ones (i.e., facts about reference, truth, etc.).[42] The base totality here is understood in terms of the physical and behavioristic elements of our conceptualized world rather than with reference to parts/aspects of a mind-independent reality. With this qualification, we can admit that the facts about our referring, say to a rabbit, supervene on those pertaining to the physical circumstances and our linguistic behavior in the presence of rabbits. Or, to use a moral analogy, two members of a certain cultural and linguistic community acting and thinking exactly the same way in a given case of moral judgment cannot be said to differ in moral worth. This endorses the plausibility of the thesis of supervenience. According to Putnam, however, these examples do not show that the base totality *determines* the facts of the higher level. The reason for this is that if one wants to *understand* or *explain* the kind of supervenience involved in the act of "referring" or "making a moral judgment," she does not look at the facts about agent's behavior or the surrounding physical circumstances. Rather, she looks "from above," i.e., from the standpoint of the higher-level facts, not the other way around.[43] If a scientist gives the description of a moral fact fully in terms of human behavior and physical conditions, we still cannot be said to obtain the fact in question. Similarly, a purely physical and behavioral characterization of a cognitive agent referring to an object fails to determine the fact about that particular instance of reference. Putnam defends a realist view in that he locates the subvenient base in the world and not in language. Nonetheless, he rejects "the *explanatory relevance* of the base totality for semantic facts."[44]

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[41] The critics and commentators complain that Wittgenstein never gives a single example of "simple objects" or "atomic states of affairs" in the *Tractatus*. Armstrong, on the other hand, explicitly says, as I have indicated in Chapter 2, that metaphysician cannot, or should not try to, give an armchair description of the world.

[42] Putnam 1994b, pp. 251-252.

Now consider an "institutional fact," to use Searle's terminology,[45] such as "Smith scores a touchdown." For Armstrong, this is a second-class state of affairs and as such it supervenes on the existence of a certain set of first-class objects, relations, and properties. For instance, the exact moment Smith receives the ball before he falls to the ground can be precisely described, we will assume, by an ideal (physical) science employing the ultimate building blocks of the physical reality—e.g., the configuration of subatomic particles making up Smith's body, and so on. Moreover, the player cannot be, from a purely material or physicalist point of view, ontologically more than what such a science describes him to be. Yet it seems clear to me that the level of the first-class entities *by and in themselves* cannot determine the second-class states of affairs since the latter is inextricably intertwined with human agents' semantic or intensional contribution—which cannot possibly be reduced to purely extensional concepts. Consider the following hypothetical example: a physical scientist of the future manages to communicate with an extra-terrestrial via electromagnetic waves. Assume further that both the scientist and the extra-terrestrial have independently developed *the* ideal microphysical science that Armstrong imagines. The scientist then transmits to the alien information about all the "base level" facts about a particular instance of Smith's scoring a touchdown; that is, he describes the subatomic occurrences in Smith's body and in his physical environment as he scores during a game. In that case, the alien would know all there is to know about the subvenient ontological base of the second-class state of affairs. *Still*, the extra-terrestrial would not understand the second-class fact related to what humans call a football game because without the intensional elements of language and an understanding of the constitution of our "phenomenal world" he would be unable to grasp the event *as* an occurrence in a football game. What I am suggesting here is not that the second-class entity is ontologically more than the subvenient base. Rather, I claim that we do *not* immediately get the second-class states of affairs once we are given the first. If this is the case, Armstrong is mistaken in believing that his "no addition of being" argument is sufficient to show that the subvenient level yields the supervenient irrespective of semantics and our ways of conceptualization. As Putnam's argument above suggests, one has to look "from above" to understand why supervenience really holds between the first and higher class entities. Armstrong may be right in maintaining that the direction of ontological determination goes from the base to the second level. His account fails, however, to be an enlightening one in terms of explicating our "second-class" properties and states of affairs as he fails to distinguish ontological from semantic determination. This brings us back to a point Putnam emphasized repeatedly: our ways and tools of conceptualization and, in particular, the intensional or semantic elements cannot be factored out in our attempts to provide an account of the world. Even a God who is omniscient only with regard to the "base totality" of the states of affairs—that is, regarding the first-class entities—would presumably be unable to understand "scoring a touchdown."[46]

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[43] *Ibid.*, p. 252.

[44] Alcoff 1996, p. 171.

[45] Searle 1969, pp. 50-53. It might be argued that the case about the institutional or normative facts is clearly different from that of the brute facts (e.g., "snow is white"). Later in this study I will offer an anti-realist (or "linguistic Kantian") account of truthmakers and argue that while such a distinction may serve certain pragmatic purposes of the theoretician, strictly speaking it is a misleading one—especially if it encourages the idea that brute facts can be regarded more or less TRistically.

A similar argument can be raised with regard to the first-class properties and the second-class predicates. The argument, briefly, is that even though our phenomenal properties are indeed no addition of being to the base level, it is a mistake to think that reality, *on and by its own*, can make the necessary arrangements in the realm of elementary objects, properties, and relations in order to concoct second-class properties such as "being yellow," "being a good football player," "being nostalgic" and so on.[47] In the next chapter, I will broaden this point to claim that in the absence of conceptual schemes, individuation of objects (*qua* determinate objects) is an extremely implausible and untenable idea. I will also argue that for the most part Putnam gets the matters right when it comes to the "making" of truths and our world of states of affairs.

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[46] And I guess this is rather consistent with our notion of God: When we say, for example, that God knows what is in people's hearts, we are hardly talking about the atoms or electric/physiological events like action potential or the organ *per se* with its blood, aorta, arteries, veins, and so on. God's alleged "knowledge" in this sense requires, it seems, some kind of "second-class beholding" which cannot be dissociated from a certain tradition of religious discourse. What I am (very speculatively) claiming is that Abraham's God (see Kierkegaard 1983, pp. 9-53), assuming for a moment that He exists and is omniscient, could not communicate his thoughts and demands if His ontology and epistemology were restricted only to the level of Armstrong's first-class entities.

[47] Here I want to say a few words about our allegedly "more robust" phenomenal properties such as colors. Realist like Frank Jackson (1996) defended what is called a "primary quality view of color" according to which colors are in fact physical properties of objects. More specifically, "they are identical with complexes of the properties the physical sciences appeal to in their causal explanations" (p. 199). My understanding of the so-called primary qualities (as well as Putnam's—see Simon Blackburn's remarks in 1994, pp. 12-13) is, of course, informed by the Berkleyan/Kantian "idealism," though I consider myself some sort of realist and naturalist. It is interesting to note that Jackson himself says in characterizing his account that in the above-mentioned paper he will be

> concerned principally with color in a thoroughly anthropocentric sense tied to normal humans in normal circumstances. (p. 206) . . . David Hilbert has a good name for this kind of theory. He calls it *anthropocentric realism*. The colors *per se* are observer independent properties, but *which* observer independent properties they are is not observer independent. (p. 208)

3.6. Anti-Realism and the Question of the "Ding An Sich"

In "Realism With a Human Face" Putnam, having criticized anti-MR_{MIN} and Realism (i.e., MR_{MAX}), reiterates a common theme of his internalist (or perhaps post-internalist) period of philosophizing by saying that the world is neither raw material nor mind's own creation.[48] The problem with such statements, however, is that they achieve little in way of elucidating what "the world" really is. I tend to think that most realists (in the customary sense of the term) have substantial misgivings about Putnam's alleged realism since, his Kantian tendencies notwithstanding, he openly tries to get rid of the notion of in-itself reality. While Kant thinks that noumenal realm is unknowable for finite cognizers, Putnam seems to believe that we cannot intelligibly talk about the in-itself reality. This is principally because the notion of an "intrinsic" property (i.e., a first-class property in the sense of Armstrong) "apart from any contribution made by language or the mind" is an empty idea; moreover, it constitutes the "root of the disease" of metaphysical realism.[49] In his 1993 article "Putnam's Pragmatic Realism," E. Sosa provides a lucid account of Putnam's approach to metaphysics. He attributes the following argument to Putnam:[50]

> a. There is no real possibility of a finished science.
>
> b. Things-in-themselves are by definition the things in the ontology of finished science, and intrinsic, objective properties are by definition those in the ideology of finished science.
>
> c. Hence, there is no possibility that there are things-in-themselves with intrinsic, objective properties.

I suspect that many people would find the association Putnam attempts to establish between the idea of things-in-themselves and that of "finished science" rather suspicious. The more crucial and dubious move, however, is Putnam's passing form the inevitably perspectival character of our concepts and truth to the perspectival nature of reality itself.[51] In this context, I do agree with the realist philosophers that there is a serious confusion in Putnam's ideas on "what there is" and, in particular, what can and what cannot be expected to be *mind-dependent*.

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[48] Putnam 1990, p. 28.
[49] Putnam 1987, p. 8.
[50] Sosa 1993, p. 613.

In order to make my point fully and properly, I will begin my discussion with the famous "cookie cutter" conception of reality. A fairly good exposition of this idea can be found in J. van Cleve's 1985 article "Epistemic Supervenience and the Circle of Belief." Van Cleve's main goal in that paper is to employ the concept of supervenience in order to show that the foundationalist form of epistemic justification is not as vulnerable to the coherentist attacks as it has often been supposed to be. According to van Cleve, his opponents who believe that non-doxastic experiential states cannot play a justificatory role tend to advocate a "cookie cutter" view of conceptualization which tells us that

> the content of experience before conceptualization is simply a sheet of homogeneous dough, a dough in which no shapes stand out until they have been *stamped* out by the industrious ego.[52]

Van Cleve lists M. Williams and I. Scheffer as allies of F. H. Bradley in defending this view. He cites C. I. Lewis as protesting against it in the following way:

> We should be beware of conceiving the given as a smooth undifferentiated flux; that would be wholly fictitious. Experience, when it comes, contains within it just those disjunctions which, when they are made explicit by our attention, mark the boundaries of events, "experiences," and things. The manner in which field of vision or a duration breaks into parts reflects our interested attitude, but attention cannot mark disjunctions in an undifferentiated field.[53]

Van Cleve's point must be admitted. There is something fundamentally mistaken about claiming that experience before conceptualization is a kind of amorphous clay that can be put into any shape by our powers of concept formation. In other words, "even if all perceptual awareness of facts involves judgment, it by no means follows that all we are aware *of* in such perception is a judgment."[54] It should suffice to remind that most animals do have some kind of "awareness" in their encounter with nature presumably without any "conceptualization" or "judgment"—as we ordinarily understand the terms—being involved in the process. To give another example from experimental psychology, we can safely assume that human depth perception invariably employs certain cognitive/physiological mechanisms (e.g., the strain felt by the eye muscles due to convergence toward a fixation point in the visual field, or motion parallax which arises out of varying vectorial values associated with the displacement of objects with respect to their position on the retina) that allow the subject to isolate and focus on the "objects" around. And the fact that we have a natural disposition to attend to various aspects/parts of the world outside ourselves even in the absence of concepts accompanying the perception admittedly strengthens van Cleve's point.

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[51] *Ibid.*, p. 608 and p. 625.

[52] van Cleve 1985, p. 96.

[53] *Ibid.*, p.96, italics mine.

I will use this line of reasoning to deal with the idea that reality is like amorphous "dough," *with no intrinsic properties*, which we carve up using our conceptual tools.[55] As the above-given discussion suggests, this whole metaphysical picture makes little (if any) sense. My reasoning is the following. If that homogeneous, undifferentiated reality is really as described above, the variety and multiplicity of human experience (and of the actual world we conceptually create and live in) must stem from the mental, cognitive, and/or linguistic tools that human agents are ordinarily thought to possess. The immediate question is: "What explains the non-homogeneity of experience if it does not come from outside?" The problem here, so far as I can see, is the exact relationship between the conceptualizers and the dough. Can there really be a substantial separation between the two as the dough-model suggests? It is most likely that we once were (and arguably still are to a great extent) members of the animal kingdom without any language and conceptualization. If this is the case, it is difficult to imagine how the theory under consideration can ever explicate the mysterious and amazing "transformation" that, if the dough-view is correct, must have taken place from our once being unsophisticated primates possessing no significant conceptual tools to a population of supreme beings whose powers of conceptualization now makes them so indispensable for the Cosmos that in their absence the whole realm of existence would somehow turn into a dull, homogeneous, amorphous dough. What this perspective misses completely is the Quinean point that humans *qua* knowers (or conceptualizers) can only be continuous with nature, not above or outside it. Language and theorizing emerge in the natural course of our contact and exchange with physical reality and, in this sense, there is nothing highly privileged about either the mental powers or linguistic tools: they have been formed in nature and they are a part of nature.

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[54] Alston 1996, p. 94.

[55] Let me note here that Putnam dismisses the cookie cutter conception of reality on the grounds that it "tries to preserve ... the naive idea that at least one category—the ancient category of Object or Substance—has an absolute interpretation." (Putnam 1987, p. 36) As will be clear in my treatment, the argument I am presenting here will have a strong bearing on Putnam's denial of the noumenal reality.

This argument can, I believe, be also used against an anti-realist like Putnam who does not subscribe to the cookie cutter view: it is more reasonable to suppose—in a way which is both Kantian and non-Kantian in different senses—that there are mind-independent, noumenal objects and properties than arguing that there are none other than what humans grace by conceptualizing—or claiming that we cannot meaningfully talk about them.

It seems to me that Putnam is making the following unwarranted inference in his ontological argument: He begins with the reasonable idea that our statements cannot correspond to "noumenal" states of affairs if the latter are understood as embedded in a reality existing independently of language and conceptual schemes. From this he makes a transition to the claim that we cannot make sense of such states of affairs and eventually concludes that there is no 'World' if this term is to denote the totality of those mind-independent, language-independent, in-itself states of affairs and self-individuating objects. If, in other words, "objecthood" is a flexible and changeable notion depending on our conceptual tools and the ways we picture reality to ourselves, it seems unintelligible to Putnam to speak of a (real) World of (real) Objects to which all our descriptions are mere approximations.

But why not deny the TRist's correspondence and the idea that we are dealing with some noumenal objects in the successful instances of truth or veridical representation *and* admit that there is a well-structured reality with its native "objects," "properties," and "relations"—without implying that the in-itself reality has, for instance, a substances-attributes or particulars-properties kind of structure *as we understand them*? I am inclined to think that Putnam's claim that the world is neither raw material nor a production of our minds creates an air of mystery regarding *what* it is that we are not creating in the course of conceptualization. Remember that according to Putnam, it is simply absurd to deny that there would be cats and mountains in our absence. The immediate question is: *What* makes *this* possible?

As I have pointed out Putnam is no friend of extreme (Goodmanian) constructivism. As Alcoff notes, Putnam is cognizant of the fact that any attempt to reduce reality to "versions" is bound to fail since those versions must be versions of something.[56] I strongly believe that Putnam fails to see the consequences of this statement. What *is*, after all, that something which gives rise to or engenders the various versions if it is, as Putnam tells us, neither another "version" nor a primordial, amorphous dough? I agree with him that neither of these alternatives make any philosophical sense. But it is difficult to understand what Putnam is driving at once he deprives himself both of such implausible alternatives and of the idea of an in-itself reality with a certain structure. He remarks elsewhere that an ordinary state of affairs can be described *either* as "there are three objects on my table" (from the ordinary observer's point of view) *or* "there are seven objects on my table" (from a mereologist's point of view).[57] Then a realist would naturally like to know what we are talking about when we point out different ways of describing "the same state of affairs" or "the same part of reality."

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[56] Alcoff 1996, pp. 165-166.
[57] Putnam 1994b, p. 246.

In arguing against the Putnamian ontology, we should also mention one strong motivation behind Armstrong's metaphysical theory. The realist account of universals, Armstrong says, is instrumental in explicating the laws of nature. For Armstrong, laws are essentially relations between (first-class) universals.[58] While this suggestion may be open to debate, it is interesting to note that a metaphysical anti-realist like Putnam is bound to encounter difficulties in explaining why there should be gravitational attraction in our world even in the absence of human cognizers, if he seriously foregoes the thought that the reality is in fact somehow structured noumenally.[59] Of course, we may never be able to fully comprehend *that* structure; but this does not seem like a cogent reason to reject the idea of a reality possessing some intrinsic "nature" of its own. As Putnam will agree, it is sufficiently clear that the phenomenal objects of our world are one way or another "constrained" in their *kinesis*. And it is very difficult to make sense of this fact without attributing a structure, form, or a kind of power to whatever lies beyond our comprehension, cognition, and conceptualization. Another important point is about the *limits* of our cognition and conceptualization in connection with the "making" of objects and states of affairs. Most sentient beings our world (people of very different conceptual schemes, other mammals, etc.) would be affected similarly if hit by a fast truck *regardless of* the way they sense, perceive, and (where applicable) conceptualize that particular event-type. Once again, such limitations certainly do require some ontological explanation, and it does not seem like Putnam has any to offer.

In his response to a critic Putnam says: "[b]ecause the notion [of an object] is inherently open . . . the very notion of a 'totality of all objects' is senseless.[60] In light of the discussion above, it is quite clear to me that this is an unsatisfactory and problematic statement. I think, on the contrary, we can adopt the thesis that there is a totality of existent things, without denying that the objects of *our* world are shaped, fashioned, and constructed via the semantic, conceptual, and cognitive tools we possess and that the objects of the world are bound to be "our objects." The crucial point is that the resultant picture we get out of simultaneously holding these two claims is, *contra* Putnam, not an incoherent one. In fact, it squares far better with our strongest intuitions about the external reality. Although Putnam teaches us an important lesson about "our" properties, relations, and states of affairs, we do not need to agree with him that noumena are an "unnecessary addition" to Kant's metaphysics,[61] or that there is no real dichotomy between intrinsic and nonintrinsic properties.[62] He correctly observes that in Kant's philosophy we cannot help but *think about* noumena, a ground for our experience.[63] However, the main reason for hanging on to something noumenal in our ontological stories does not spring from an almost religious faith, as he suggests.[64] Rather, it is a rational postulate the need for which was first perceived by Kant, the philosopher who has the greatest influence on Putnam's ideas.

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[58] Armstrong 1997, pp. 223-231.

[59] I do not claim here that my metaphysical account differs from that of Putnam in offering a detailed ontological story behind such physical phenomena as gravitational attraction. The point rather is that without having a (quasi-) transcendental assumption about the existence of a more or less structured mind-independent reality, it becomes exceedingly difficult to give a reasonable philosophical account of what sustains the objectivity of what we take to be robust physical happenings in nature. (My thanks to Alexander Rueger for our discussions on this issue.)

[60] Putnam 1992, p. 367.

One may feel that there is a theoretical lacuna here and be tempted to try to give a detailed account of the connection between the elements of in-itself reality and our conceptualized, "second-class" states of affairs. More openly, one may envisage some sort of a relation (mapping, correspondence, reference, or perhaps even causal connection) between our facts and the hypothesized noumenal ones. Kant had serious misgivings about the possibility and intelligibility of such an account, and I believe his misgivings were well-founded. Once we declare that one end of such a relation, i.e., the noumenal entities, are *ex hypothesi* unknowable, it is difficult to see how we can meaningfully and usefully articulate a theory of the mapping relation between the phenomenal world and in-itself reality. But, from a Kantian perspective, this predicament cannot by itself be a good reason for denying that there is a structured reality independent of our conceptualization. Another relevant point is the following. It is rather typical that philosophers tend to equate the notion of a "structured reality" with that of "propositionally structured reality." And this seems to provide some motivation to produce a "mapping" between noumena and phenomena. It seems to me a more plausible and promising approach to say that it is possible that reality has an ontological structure *without* having a *propositional* design—although, given the essentially propositional structure of languages like English, it may be difficult for us to imagine what that metaphysical structure/form would be like.[65]

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[61] Putnam 1986, p. 61.
[62] Putnam 1987, p. 36.
[63] Putnam 1986, pp. 60-61.
[64] Putnam 1982, p. 163.

So I defend an ontology which is simultaneously anti-TRist and non-Putnamian. Although I consider my metaphysical theory far more Kantian than Putnam's, there is an important difference between the Kantian metaphysics and my account. According to Kant, things that cannot be known in themselves are so because they are *outside* space-time—the latter being the pure forms of human intuition. My account is based on the (minimalist) metaphysical realist assumption that both the cognitive agents and the things to be known and/or perceived by them are somehow "in" reality which exists independently of cognizers. Hence, the impossibility of knowing things as they are arises not out of some transcendental idealism (though I sympathize with the Kantian idea that part of the limitation of our worldview comes from our having a particular "finite" cognitive structure) but from the necessarily perspectival nature of language, and the "incomplete" character of human knowledge and in general. On the other hand, Kant and I are in total agreement that things in themselves are required by *reason* and that it makes no sense to claim that "there can be appearance without anything that appears."[66]

Let me also note that appealing to the Kantian notion of a *noumenal realm* is not the only possible way to construe Kant's theory. According to H. Allison, for example, we do not need to interpret Kant's words as saying that his transcendental distinction is between "a thing considered as an appearance and the same thing considered as a thing in itself." Rather, the distinction is

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[65] I owe this point to Bruce Hunter.

[66] *Critique of Pure Reason*, Bxxvi.

> "between a *consideration* of a thing as it appears and a *consideration* of the same thing as it is in itself. . . These contrasting ways of considering an object are simply two sides of the same act of transcendental reflection. . . The perplexing aspect of this account is that, according to Kant's own analysis, in considering an object as it is in itself we cannot gain any knowledge of the real nature of that object. But although we cannot know things as they are in themselves, we can nonetheless know how they must be conceived in transcendental reflection, when they are considered as they are in themselves.[67]

I am not in a position to judge if this particular construal is an accurate reflection of what Kant had in mind. The more relevant point in the context of this chapter—which I share with Lynch—is that one can possibly use certain *Kantian* ideas and arguments for her anti-realist purposes instead of waging a discursive war against one controversial aspect of Kant's own theory. I think Putnam's version of anti-realism loses its strength once we deprive him of this ontological straw man called the "noumenal *realm*."

I would like to stress this last point. The realist idea that there exists an in-itself and structured reality independently of minds and languages does not, in my view, entail that the occurrences of the phenomenal world are isolated from or uninformed by that reality. Kant did not believe it either, though I suspect that this is the idea Putnam has in mind when he attacks the very notion of noumena. Going back to my example of "getting hit by a truck": the very occurrence of such an accident must actually take place in the mind-independent reality, and both the phenomenal objects and the phenomenal state of affairs involved in this instance *must* be sustained by a well-structured, stable reality. In *this* sense, we are not "removed from" the noumenal objects and properties.

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[67] Allison 1983, p. 241.

We must, however, deny the following three views: (1) the claim that there is no such in-itself reality so that the category of existence is exhausted by mere phenomena (Goodman); (2) the idea that there is a reality beyond all conceptualization, which manufactures miscellaneous levels or classes of states of affairs—the "ultimate facts," or "base totality," being open in principle to human science/cognition (Armstrong); and (3) the claim that while ordinary objects of human perception and conceptualization would still exist in the absence of human agents, this by itself is not a sufficient reason to embrace the notion of a reality with a built-in, noumenal structure (Putnam). In my opinion, this last option is not a well-thought and intelligible anti-realist alternative. (This is why in the beginning of this chapter I labeled the last phase of Putnam's realism as "ambiguous anti-realism.")

3.7. A Sanguine Attempt at Reconciliation

In the preceding section I suggested that we shift our focus of attention and emphasis regarding the anti-realist arguments on ontology. Such a shift in the anti-realist strategy may unexpectedly help us persuade the two sides of the debate to sign (grudgingly, I fear) a treaty for metaphysical peace as follows: the realist who wants to hold on to his in-itself objects and states of affairs is given that basic metaphysical furniture while the anti-realist is assured that the non-omniscient cognitive agents will have nothing to do with these noumenal entities in the world they experience and live in. In a less fancy language, I am suggesting here that there are alternative ways of formulating the anti-realist argument and that one which grants the realist the existence of mind-independent objects and properties is likely to come up with an account which accords better with our deep-rooted intuitions about reality. Part of the strength of the realist argument comes, I submit, from the plausible idea that there are objective properties of, and relations between, the things found in the universe.[68] A realist like Armstrong would, of course, go further and maintain that once these universals are admitted as the bases of facts, it becomes difficult to see why linguistic relativity is really an issue for a factual-realist. Conceptual schemes are relevant, the argument goes, solely in the context of the *description* of those facts, not as having a constitutive role in their formation. And anti-realism is seriously flawed since it fails to do justice to the *real* properties and relations of objects. I find this intuition valuable although I think TR can hardly be helpful in investigating the actual states of affairs. But it is not very difficult to defang TR on this matter. The realist's reasonable reaction to his opponent's scornful attitude toward the real objects and properties is justified only when it is against the radical anti-realist programs which tend to defend the relativity not merely of conceptual schemes, but also of *reality*. My preferred anti-realist interpretation regarding facts does *not* rule out that the external (mind-independent) reality comprises structured properties or relations in/between objects. In this sense, there is certainly no need, so far as I can see, for the anti-realist to deny that there really exist "*noumenal occurrences*" pertaining to particular things. This means, to put it in a crude manner, that certain "occurrences" must in fact be taking place in/between objects of the universe even in the absence of subjects who try to understand them, and that those "occurrences" are, for example, what physical sciences generally strive to uncover by the aid of theories and hypothetical entities *that human agents invent*. In this sense, I think that Putnam is beating the wrong horse. The decisive question, for me, is whether or not agents possessing particular languages and limited capabilities can have *im*-mediate cognitive/epistemic access to Tractarian (in-itself, mind-independent) facts as envisaged by Armstrong. It appears that the TRist aims (implicitly or explicitly) at *such* facts and presumes that they can unproblematically be "reached" and represented in ordinary or scientific language. This is a misguided idea because if there are any noumenal facts, they must be simply irrelevant both with respect to the human agents' day-to-day comportment and for the purposes of scientific enterprise. To sum up: Putnam is wrong because it is more reasonable to assume that there *are* intrinsic or noumenal "facts," "properties," "happenings," etc., and TR is mistaken because *such* entities or occurrences are not reachable (or "usable") for finite cognizers.

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[68] Once again, I would like to warn the reader that my talk about the properties and relations of/in the noumenal reality must be taken in a loose sense and with a grain of salt. I share the Kantian (epistemological) scruples over talking too much about the entities in-themselves.

This provides us with a response to the problem that emerged in the end of the previous chapter. What Wittgenstein and Armstrong do in their metaphysical accounts *does* indeed make some philosophical sense. Nonetheless, we must be conscious of the fact that these philosophers are actually *not* dealing with the structure of ordinary, mundane, perceivable, and understandable states of affairs of the world but with the realm that presumably lies beyond human cognition. Therefore, it is simply a moot idea that Armstrong's subtle metaphysical exposition can illuminate our "homely" facts. In order to get enlightened about *that* sort of states of affairs, we must, I claim, turn our attention away from where the TRist wants to take us to. This will constitute the main topic of Chapter Six.

3.8. Concluding Remarks

I want to conclude by saying that my showing sympathy towards realism about the existence of objects does not, I believe, entail my embracing a Tractarian sort of factualism. I agree with Lynch that some sort of "Kantian factualism" seems to be a more viable position than a "Tractarian factualism." To recapitulate, according to the latter kind of factualism, facts are just "out there" independently of the cognitive/linguistic tools of cognitive agents, and, furthermore, we are acquainted with those facts in a transparent or veridical way. I believe the issues raised in this chapter militate against such optimism; that is, as far as we can tell, it is impossible for us, human cognizers, to enable ourselves to perceive and understand things *as they are*. Of course, a Tractarian realist might be inclined to deny this latter claim—especially if she has a Tractarian notion of how language functions. This, however, is a highly problematic position and there is at least one good, though not conclusive, reason to think that it is mistaken: its original defender renounced it completely a few decades after he wrote the *Tractatus*.

According to the argument I have presented, there are good reasons to believe that "facts" are actually formed within, and fashioned by the limits and tools of, a language.[69] For example, a "fact" about a car accident seems like a part of the mind-independent (external) reality only to *us*, who constantly and collectively conceptualize the external reality in *that* particular way, but, presumably, not to the members of some "primitive" tribe or to extra-terrestrials. What we call a fact would arguably not be an occurrence "out there" for *them*. Inversely, at least some of their "facts" would probably be nonexistent for us. But, then, how can one maintain that it is *we* who get the facts right, i.e., *as they are in the reality*? The TRist cannot, it seems, claim that we do have some sort of exclusive and immediate access to the objective facts "out there" unless he adopts some sort of anthropocentricism or ethnocentricism according to which the external reality (comprising, *inter alia*, "facts") amazingly "speaks" our language. Needless to say, many philosophers these days believe that examples like the one given above gesture towards a philosophical stance that balks at the attempts to render language and the mind-independent reality extremely—and, thus, suspiciously—isomorphic.

Despite my criticism of TR, I cannot sympathize with Putnam's ontology. Putnam believes that "our words and life are constrained by a reality not of our own invention" but goes on to say that it is a "philosophical error" to suppose that "the term 'reality' must refer to a single super thing."[70] In fact, Putnam adds, we constantly "renegotiate our notion of reality as our language and our life develops." I have argued above that such "renegotiations" and alterations in "our conceptions of reality" does not show that the metaphysical realist is mistaken in talking about noumenal entities. As I have tried to show, Putnam's version of anti-MR_{MAX} (i.e., his revised internal realism) cannot successfully stand a carefully conducted metaphysical scrutiny.

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[69] As I have argued in this chapter, this certainly does *not* mean that reality is also created by language or minds—hence my acceptance of MR_{MIN}.

[70] Putnam 1994c, p. 452.

I have defended in this chapter an ontological view which can be described—remembering the tripartite characterization of realism I offered in the beginning of this study—as a combination of MR_{MIN} (i.e., that there *are* mind-independent objects) and anti-MR_{MAX} (i.e., it is not the case that that there would still be existing objects *as such-and-such* even if there were no human beings to perceive and conceptualize them). I have rejected Putnam's version of anti-MR_{MAX} due to metaphysical (Kantian) considerations, and Armstrong's version of MR_{MIN} because it fails to provide a reasonable picture of the relationship between the "base totality" and our phenomenal world. Regarding the truth-making relation, I agree with Armstrong's idea that *propositional truth* cannot be found in objects. Later in this study, I will develop my own version of AR by "legitimizing" the notion of states of affairs as truthmakers, while trying to avoid the implausible ontological and/or semantic pictures that result either from TR or from Quinean thingism.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Davidsonian Challenge

Since a significant part of my project is to defend a scheme-relativist notion of propositional truth, in this and next chapter I will discuss and respond to Donald Davidson's famous attack on the whole idea of scheme-based semantics. An adequate understanding of Davidson's position requires an examination of two major influences in the development of his philosophy of language and theory of meaning: W. V. Quine's ideas on holism, the dogmas of empiricism, indeterminacy of translation, and principle of charity on the one hand, and the semantic conception of truth of A. Tarski on the other. My principal aim here will be to incorporate Davidson's theory in my discussion of realism developed thus far. In the next chapter, I will offer a detailed critique of Davidson's objection to the idea of conceptual schemes and suggest a way to circumvent the alleged difficulties of scheme-based semantics.

4.1. Quine and Epistemology

For Quine, an accurate picture of humans *qua* knowers—to use a risky term—requires certain considerations that have typically been set aside by philosophers as irrelevant in constructing grand epistemological theories. We are organic beings who "started from primitive beginnings"[1] and gradually evolved under distressing conditions in a world we did not make. In our struggle with nature, we have successfully employed certain innate skills we possess in order to go far beyond the unsophisticated animal we used to be. This remarkable fact is the key to understand the nature not only of the human subject who processes the input to "the system" but also of what comes out of that process. We are essentially stimulus-response machines that act upon external stimuli hitting our nerve endings. This was the fundamental principle operating in nature when we were coping with predators, and it is essentially the same fundamental principle operating when we develop the quantum physics. In this sense, Quine is a philosopher who reckons our species as continuous with the rest of the animal kingdom, only with tremendously developed skills and a remarkably successful science—as the resultant product of this "natural" process.

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[1] T. Kuhn's (1970) phrase.

The sort of naturalism Quine advocates has far-reaching epistemological implications. Given that the Cartesian quest turned out to be a "lost cause," Quine urges us to turn our attention to the actual process of the construction of a world picture, to the natural phenomenon of our taking "meager input" from the outside world and generating "torrential output" in the form of descriptions of that world, and to "how evidence relates to theory, and in what ways one's theory of nature transcends any available evidence."[2] Thus, epistemology abandons its traditional justification-centered role, and settles for a less ambitious project investigating, broadly speaking, the connection between evidence and theory. Moreover, with this new identity epistemology has acquired, psychology and neurophysiology become crucially important disciplines. Actually, Quine must be seen as defending a "strong replacement" thesis since he proclaims that this new epistemology is nothing but "a chapter of psychology."[3]

Several critical points must be observed here. First, Quine thereby abandons the quest for some philosophical (or non-scientific) justification of our knowledge of the external world. This impossible project is replaced, as mentioned above, by the psychological study of the relation between evidence and scientific theories. Second, since Quine rules out any sort of non-empirical or philosophical authority sitting in judgment on scientific matters, science is put in charge to defend its own results. If this is to raise eyebrows of those who have scruples about circularity, they are advised by Quine simply to drop them. And this is because these scruples "have little point once we have stopped dreaming of deducing science from observations."[4] Hence, science is the sole authority to correct its own mistakes. Third, this account gives one the impression that Quine gives up any sort of *normativity* and embraces a purely descriptive epistemology. A more accurate characterization would perhaps be that Quine is abandoning a distinctively philosophical theory of knowledge, not norms of scientific enterprise. Hence, the epistemologist can still use norms, for instance, for bringing about successful predictions, and, in this restricted sense, such norms can be considered mainly as "engineering norms" which regulate the anticipation of stimuli.[5]

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[2] Quine 1994a, p. 25.

[3] Kornblith 1994, pp. 3-5; Quine 1994a, p. 25.

I will mention here one major criticism in connection with Quine's ideas about naturalizing epistemology. It is commonly recognized that while his incisive critique of a particular tradition is well-justified, he nevertheless lets the epistemological pendulum swing just to the other extreme, which is equally undesirable from a philosophical point of view. Having shown that the foundationalist tradition failed on both "conceptual" (or semantic) and "doctrinal" (or alethic) grounds, Quine seems to take this result as a point of departure for his argument that normative epistemology should be given up altogether and be replaced by an empirical study of the relations between sensory input and cognitive output. Many epistemologists have correctly noted that Quine derives actually too much from his plausible attack on the foundationalist tradition in epistemology. Accordingly, there is something profoundly misguided about Quine's conclusion that the lesson of the above-mentioned failure is to abandon epistemology (or, rather, normativity) and embrace empirical psychology.[6] Actually, many philosophers think that Quine fails in his attempt to purge the epistemological endeavor of its normative elements. According to J. Kim, the sort of relation Quine intends to study, viz., that between the input and the output, is, strictly speaking *not* an evidential relation. In fact, the concept of evidence is obtained by *abstracting* from the causal/nomological aspects of our interaction with nature, and this concept is closely linked to another normative one: justification. Kim contends that

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[4] *Ibid.*, p. 20.

[5] Quine 1990, p. 19.

[6] See, e.g., Kim 1994, p. 40.

> one thing is "evidence" for another just in case the first tends to enhance the reasonableness or justification of the second. And such evidential relations hold in part because of the "contents" of the items involved, not merely because of the causal or nomological connections between them. A strictly *nonnormative* concept of evidence is *not our concept of evidence*; it is something that we do not understand.[7]

The upshot of this argument is that a psychologized epistemology and a normative one cannot possibly investigate the same sort of relation. This is clear if we consider the fact that Quinean epistemology and the causal relations it investigates have indeed nothing to say about justification or "rational acceptability."[8] Furthermore, Kim thinks that even the concept of "belief" is a normative one. When we attribute a particular belief to an agent, we are typically interested in representations and similar intensional states she is presumed to have. But how can this be done unless we regard the agent essentially as a rational being who possesses a more or less coherent belief system? Of course, Quine can counter this challenge by saying that the output (i.e., representations) of an agent need *not* be beliefs with propositional contents; instead, they can be taken as "appropriate neural states." But in this case, Kim maintains, "belief, along with justification, drops out of Quinean epistemology, and it is unclear in what sense we are left with an inquiry that has anything to do with knowledge."[9] In order to avoid such implausible consequences, it seems more reasonable to adopt a more conservative approach. The theoreticians who are thus inclined do admit the relevance of our psychological and biological capacities in studying human knowledge. They nonetheless determine their central aim as reflecting on

> the cognitive enterprise (including the ventures of science), on its history and on the capacities of those who participate in it, to achieve *corrigible*

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[7] *Ibid.*, p. 42.
[8] BonJour 1994, p. 287.
[9] Kim 1994, pp. 45-46.

> formulations of the goals of the enterprise and *corrigible* accounts of promising strategies for achieving those goals. Epistemology and philosophy of science, thus construed, attempt to fulfill traditional normative functions, and conceive themselves as continuous with the methodological reflections of scientific practitioners.[10]

Kitcher calls this middle position—between the Quinean distrust of normativity and a robust apsychologism—*traditional naturalism*, implying that its roots go back to philosophers of the Enlightenment who, generally speaking, took seriously the workings of human mind in producing their epistemological theories. Traditional naturalism also seems to be shared by a number of contemporary philosophers such as Goldman, Dretske, Laudan, and Kornblith.[11]

4.2. The Quinean Holism, Tarskian Schema, and Davidson

Quine's radical naturalism is of pivotal importance in understanding his conception of language and, in particular, radical translation. In *Word and Object* he characterizes language as "the complex of present dispositions to verbal behavior."[12] As Malpas observes, the project of naturalized epistemology, broadly construed, encompasses *inter alia* investigation of language and translation. Quine's well-known maxim "ontology recapitulates philology" can then be supplemented by another one: "translation recapitulates epistemology."[13] In the process of translation from one language to another, human agents are engaged in an activity aimed at figuring out how "meager input" received from their environment in the form of surface irritations and "torrential output" which comes out in the form of verbal and nonverbal behavior get connected to one another. In order to fully appreciate this, Quine urges us—famously—to consider the hypothetical case of a field linguist striving to translate the word 'gavagai' uttered by a native speaker in the presence of a rabbit. Given that the native's utterance can be translated to the linguist's language in a number of different and possibly incompatible ways (e.g., "Lo, rabbit!," "I see undetached rabbit parts," "There goes rabbithood," etc.) each according well with the former's verbal behavior, we get Quine's famous thesis of indeterminacy of translation which seems to follow naturally from his behavioristic approach. We can, however, gain a better grasp of the concept of indeterminacy via another central notion he introduces. The *affirmative stimulus meaning* of a sentence for a speaker is defined by Quine as the class of all stimulations which would prompt assent—and a similar definition is provided *mutatis mutandis* for the negative case where the speaker displays dissent behavior.[14] Translation is possible because the speaker and translator are linguistically connected to each other by way of shared stimulus meanings. This view has a very crucial implication with respect to philosophy of language: since sensory stimulations are tied to the concepts of meaning *and* evidence for sentences, the meaning of a given sentence is actually *not* separable from the pertinent information. This is a result of Quine's reaction to the empiricist dogmas and, broadly, of his holism.[15] In the Quinean picture, *observation sentences* differ from the rest in their being directly related to sensory stimulation or "patterns of excited nerve endings." All other sorts of sentences get their meaning "from their connections with observation sentences and their logical relations to one another."[16] Despite the fact that Quine privileges those sentences directly related to observation, we must not lose sight of the fact that he is also a defender of ontological relativity. Such relativism seems to have two senses for Quine: first ontology is relative to the language, theory, or scheme chosen to describe reality; second, it is relative to a particular agent's interpretation of (or within) that language.[17]

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[10] Kitcher 1992, p. 58.
[11] *Ibid.*, pp. 74-77.
[12] Quine 1970, p. 27.
[13] Malpas 1992, p. 12.

Davidson and Quine share the holistic tenet that meaning and belief are co-dependent and that the semantic features of our language are essentially public. Davidson is, however, not a supporter of the project of radically naturalizing epistemology for he maintains that "causes are not reasons, and only reasons provide justification or legitimation."[18] Davidson's interest lies in a semantic, rather than epistemological, project. Consequently, he dissociates himself from the idea of implementing a "narrowly extensionalistic" program and trying to do without the whole discourse on beliefs, intentions and propositional attitudes.[19] Davidson does not regard Quine as a reductionist since the latter declares that "we cannot strip away the conceptual trappings sentence by sentence." Still, he thinks that "there is according to Quine a definite distinction to be made between the invariant content and the variant conceptual trappings."[20] While Davidson's philosophy of language and meaning is largely informed by Quine's conception of translation and his holistic approach, Davidson is yet convinced that there are residual elements of empiricism in Quine's account which a tenable theory of language and meaning must dispense with. Getting rid of notions like stimulus meanings and privileged observation sentences, Davidson places considerable amount of semantic weight on the principle of charity according to which those interpretations which minimize disagreement must be preferred. With this move the emphasis is shifted from the problem of providing a translation manual for the speaker's (alien) language to that of spelling out a theory of meaning which is decidedly built upon semantic concerns.[21] One consequence of adopting the principle of charity across the board is that the indeterminacy in the actual instances of interpretation will not be so severe as it is for Quine. And this is because even though human agents can and do make mistakes in their beliefs about the world around them, successful communication and interpretation strongly suggest that people must be "getting things right" most of the time. Disagreement across people or communities is possible (and intelligible) only against a background of substantial amount of agreement and, hence, a common basis for thought and discourse. These remarks ultimately relate, of course, to Davidson's rejection of the last dogma of empiricism: the distinction between theory and observation (data), scheme and content, style and substance, conceptualization and cues.[22]

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[14] Quine 1970, pp. 32-33.

[15] Malpas 1992, p. 17. Malpas thinks that both indeterminacy and holism are ontological theses. More clearly, "[for Quine], there is no fact of the matter about the beliefs to be attributed to speakers or the meanings to attach to utterances" (p. 19).

[16] Davidson 1990, p. 306.

[17] Farrell 1994, p. 81.

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[18] Malpas 1992, p. 209.
[19] Norris 1997, p. xvi.
[20] Davidson 1989, p. 162.
[21] Davidson 1985, p. 149.

The principal aim of interpretation, as with Quine, is to arrive at the beliefs and meanings by way of an observation of verbal behavior. But Davidson's radical interpreter aims to produce a Tarski-like characterization of truth for a speaker whose language is completely alien to the former. Even though Davidson agrees with Quine that "a theory of meaning for a language is what comes out of empirical research into linguistic behavior,"[23] he demands that "a theory of interpretation satisfy the constraints of a *theory of truth* . . . ."[24] Davidson finds the latter component—which he needs in order to bring together various semantic components in his account of interpretation—in the work of A. Tarski. The resultant theory turns out, in its essence, to be an interesting marriage of the Quinean holism and Tarski's semantic theory of truth adopted for natural languages.

As Davidson notes, Tarski did not intend to formulate a semantic theory—as opposed to a mere definition of the truth predicate for formalized languages. He wanted to provide the *extension* of the truth predicate in a language *L* by means of giving a list of the T-sentences for *L* (e.g., "Il pleut" is true in French if and only if it is raining) which amount to nothing but partial definitions of truth in *L*. Although Davidson believes that Tarski told us very important things about truth, he maintains that Tarski did not show how this concept gets connected to meaning and belief in the actual instances of interpretation. This is a significant point because

> [i]n the case of a theory of truth, what we want to know is how to tell when T-sentences (and hence the theory as a whole) describe the language of a group or an individual. This obviously requires specifying at least part of the content of the concept of truth which Tarski's truth predicates fail to capture.[25]

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[22] Davidson 1989, p. 162.
[23] Rorty 1986, p. 352.
[24] Davidson 1990, p. 319, italics mine.
[25] *Ibid.*, p. 297.

Tarski's account is disquotational (at least for those cases where the vocabulary of the object language *L* is contained within the meta-language by means of which we produce the T-sentences) in the sense that it makes possible unmediated contact between the agents and the world by rendering a transition "from the context 'mention' to that of 'use'."[26] This is a central idea shared by Davidson and, as we shall see, also a main motivation for him for denying the scheme-content distinction. In contrast to the Tarskian way, however, Davidson problematizes translation and the relation of synonymy, hence inverting Tarski's project:

> we want to achieve an understanding of meaning or translation by assuming a prior grasp of the concept of truth. What we require, therefore, is a way of judging the acceptability of T-sentences that is not syntactical, and makes no use of the concepts of translation, meaning, or synonymy, but is such that acceptable T-sentences will in fact yield interpretations.[27]

So even if a Tarski-like definition may satisfy the formal requirements of a "theory of truth,"[28] it fails to provide substantive criteria for truth as we normally understand the notion. According to Davidson, truth is our connection with the world, and it is very doubtful that Tarski's semantic theory is in any reasonable way helpful to illuminate human cognizers' veridical success in their verbal interaction with one another.

These thoughts dovetail with the Davidsonian idea that the T-sentences for a language are not accidentally true biconditionals. The consequences of a truth theory are law-like statements in that they are capable of supporting counterfactuals. There are, in other words, certain empirical conditions to be imposed on a truth theory *if* it is to serve as a theory of meaning—a principal desideratum for the whole Davidsonian project. So the right hand side of the T-sentences are employed in order to interpret the sentences named on the left hand side of the biconditional, allowing the schema to be used "in justifications of beliefs and behavior."[29] In a nutshell, a truth theory for a natural language is reckoned as an empirical theory which must be confirmed for a speaker (or linguistic community).

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[26] Norris 1997, p. 3.

[27] Davidson 1985, p.150.

[28] As Kirkham (1992, p. 269) observes, it is actually a mistake to call the Tarski-like theories "theories of truth" since they actually never aim at analyzing the very notion of propositional truth.

4.3. Davidson on Truth-Making

For Davidson, the meaning of a sentence uttered by a speaker is given by its *truth conditions*. Moreover, the interpreter's linguistic understanding is due mainly to knowledge of such conditions provided by the T-sentences. Davidson's aim is not, in its essence, to provide a theory of truth but rather to offer a philosophical elucidation of verbal communication and understanding which are, emphatically, *actions* that we perform in the course of our encounter with the environment. Although an internal or pragmatic realist like Putnam seems to have a more "direct" interest in the concept of truth than Davidson, both of these philosophers presuppose that truths are found and/or formed at the "second-class level" (i.e., the level of phenomena) and that the "first-class," if we allow that discourse, has nothing to do with our propositional truths.[30] In other words, both Putnam and Davidson, despite their remarkable differences, recognize that the objective reality stripped of its semantic dimension is incapable of generating propositional truths. Putnam writes:

> It is statements (not abstract entities called "propositions") that are true or false, and while it is true that the sky would still have been blue even if language users had not evolved, it is not true that *true propositions* would still have existed. If language users had not evolved, there would still have been a world, but there would not have been any *truths*. . . [So we must] give up the picture of Nature as having its very own language which it is waiting for us to discover and use.[31]

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[29] LePore 1986, p. 8.

[30] We must note, however, that Putnam and Davidson admit the existence of certain *causal* connections between the surrounding circumstances and our linguistic practices.

[31] Putnam 1994a, p. 302

And Davidson concurs by saying "[n]othing in the world, no object or event, would be true or false if there were not thinking creatures.[32] In this sense, both of these philosophers regard an ontological-alethic project like that of Armstrong as fatally mistaken.

At this point, one may be tempted to ask what *makes* truths according to Davidson's theory. We have seen in Chapter Three that Armstrong's strongly realistic account of truth-making fails to be a convincing one, and it is unlikely that any realist theory of a kindred character has the promise of enlightening us on this issue. As a matter of fact, there is a perspicuous distrust among philosophers today of the whole idea of truth-making, probably because it is often associated with the strong metaphysical realist versions of factualism. While it is a solid fact for the overwhelming majority of philosophers that most of our empirical statements are either true or false and that our truth-talk is legitimate discourse, the consensus comes to a halt when it comes to one asks what actually "makes" an empirical proposition true. The opposition to the idea truth-making is often represented by the deflationists and/or pragmatist thinkers. Hence, Barry Allen in his provocative book *Truth in Philosophy* claims that "[s]tatements are not made to be true at all; instead, they are made to circulate, to pass for true."[33] Similarly, in *Inquiries into Truth and Interpretation*, Davidson declares that "[n]othing . . ., no thing, makes sentences and theories true: not experience, not [Quine's] surface irritations, not the world, can make a sentence true."[34] In a later article, Davidson defends the view that the correspondence theory of truth can be a viable account only if it is purged of its "confrontational" aspects.[35] Accordingly, Davidson allows objective truth conditions and an objectively existing world and, contrary to what may seem, does not advocate a reduction of truth to doxastic and justificatory notions. He maintains that realism need not be a repugnant view once we realize that a correspondence theory is consistent with (non-relativistic) coherentism.

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[32] Davidson 1990, p. 279.
[33] Allen 1993, p. 5.
[34] Davidson 1985, p. 194.
[35] Davidson 1986a, p. 307.

In "The Structure and the Content of Truth," Davidson reiterates the idea that even though Tarski's convention-T is of significant use for a theory of meaning and interpretation, he did not provide (1) a substantial definition of the concept of truth, (2) an answer to how a truth predicate applies to a particular language, or (3) an account of the concept of translation and of the connection of the semantic theory with the actual users of language.[36] Although Davidson's arguments in this article are largely consistent with the account given in the *Inquiries*, he indicates that he "deplores" his previous ideas about correspondence. Whereas Davidson spelled out his initial misgivings about correspondence along the lines of the counter-arguments of Otto Neurath and Carl Hempel, he now contends that

> the real objection is . . . that such theories fail to provide entities to which truth vehicles (whether we take these to be statements, sentences or utterances) can be said to correspond.[37]

Elsewhere Davidson clarifies his position further by stating that we must disabuse ourselves of the idea that true beliefs "represent" or "correspond to" anything at all.[38] He thinks that he thereby secures human agents' direct contact with the world and blocks the way to relativism with regard to truth. Therefore, the resultant alethic picture is that Davidson retains the notion of propositional truth while jettisoning the whole idea of truthmakers and the representationalist program which he believes to be completely bankrupt.

4.4. Davidson and Realism

Davidson believes that while Quine (1961a) successfully demonstrated that empiricism is built upon two untenable dogmas (viz., the analytic-synthetic or meaning-information distinction and the belief in the possibility of reduction of each meaningful statement to immediate experience), he nonetheless retained the distinction between data received through our nerve endings and the manner in which we organize it in order to make sense of reality. This residual dogma of empiricism is a critical theme and a major target in Davidson's attack on the scheme-based semantics as exemplified eminently by Putnam who believes that the truth conditions of our statements are determined solely within conceptual schemes. As I have discussed, this is a sort of Kantianism in that it requires semantic and/or cognitive intermediaries in representing and understanding the world. Davidson's account differs notably from those of traditional realists like Armstrong, internal realists like Putnam, anti-ARists like Dummett, and anti-MRists like Goodman. The essential point of departure is the ultimate aim of the Davidsonian program: his interest lies chiefly in a theory of meaning and interpretation as opposed to a "pure" alethic or ontological theory spelled out in a manner irrespective of how the theory gets "cashed out" in the actual cases of translation, interpretation, and understanding. Thus, Davidson takes truth (or, more correctly, "the attitude of holding true")[39] basic for all language and for all instances of interpretation of a speaker's statements by another agent. The natural and perplexing question: is Davidson a realist or anti-realist?

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[36] Davidson 1990, pp. 295-300.
[37] *Ibid.*, p. 304.
[38] Davidson 1989, p. 165.

Norris maintains that Davidson's principle of charity is not, contrary to what may seem, a powerful argument for taking (nonepistemic) truth "as logically prior to issues of meaning and interpretation, and hence as playing a crucial role in his case against cultural-linguistic relativism."[40] According to Norris, once Davidson identifies truth with the attitude of holding true (or "assenting disposition") which an interpreter can justifiably attribute to a speaker, it becomes difficult to see how the former can ever be in a position to tell either that the latter is mistaken in his belief or that the interpretation is somehow flawed. Moreover, the truth predicate now ceases to be a genuine semantic device for *all* sentences of a language but rather becomes a function of the attitudes and dispositions of those agents who produce interpretable discourse. This accords well with

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[39] Norris 1997, p. 4.
[40] *Ibid.*, p. 34.

Dummett's anti-realism which rules out the intelligibility of "evidence-transcendent" truths. The principle of charity globally applied by Davidson appears, then, to give way to a similar sort of anti-realism for Davidson too dispenses with

> any idea of truth which would question the baseline premise that we (and other people, other languages or cultures) must necessarily be counted 'right in most matters' if our and their beliefs are to make any sense. . . Davidson's principle of charity in the end turns out to be perfectly compatible with a belief-based (speaker- and interpreter-relativized) theory of 'truth' which could accommodate any number of false, unwarranted, or downright irrational beliefs so long as they conjured an assenting disposition from both parties concerned.[41]

Davidson makes it sufficiently clear, as I have hinted above, that he disagrees with both MRists and Putnam.[42] In light of these facts, one may plausibly think that he is searching for a neutral ground on which both the realist and the anti-realist can have a minimalist agreement on what propositional truth or the truth predicate is all about. Rorty seems to have such an idea in his mind when he claims that Davidson's position is akin to A. Fine's Natural Ontological Attitude.[43] I believe not only that Fine's NOA fails to fulfill its promise of reconciliation but, more importantly, that Rorty is wrong in thinking that the Davidsonian project has essential similarities with Fine's account. I further believe that it is important to see *why* Rorty is misled on the nature of Davidson's semantic theory and general philosophical perspective. So I will briefly talk about Fines' ontological neutralism and draw some relevant conclusions.

There is an understandable theoretical attraction in the idea that a neutral position may be the answer to our questions and concerns regarding the ontological-alethic tug-of-war between realism and anti-realism. Fine's point of departure is a contention which is presumably shared by a considerable number of philosophers today, viz., that a strictly unadulterated, loyalist stance on either side of the debate has limited chance of success when it comes to offering an ontological and/or alethic view which is to enjoy wide acceptance among epistemologists and metaphysicians. Fine, having shown the weaknesses of both realism and anti-realism in the context of philosophy of science, proceeds to offer a new perspective aimed at capturing the intuitions shared by both of these camps.[44] This Natural Ontological Attitude accepts, we are told, the scientific statements like the ordinary empirical ones and trusts scientists when they say there are electrons. NOA is minimalist in that once this core position is adopted, the realist and anti-realist can add to this common core in accordance with their particular preferences. Tarski's semantic theory of truth proves to be of valuable assistance in the constitution of the core position since NOA deliberately distances itself from any salient ontological commitments. Fine also tells us that NOA "respects" our common or customary epistemological concepts and discourse. Since it avoids the grandiose philosophical ideals and profundities, NOA regards the quest for a general aim of Science as futile as that for the Meaning of Life. To put it simply: it avoids all unnecessary attachments to science; it has no additives. I will not offer here an elaborate exposition of Fine's NOA as I believe that a concise characterization is sufficient to serve our present purposes. Now, despite its *prima facie* theoretical attraction, some philosophers justifiably balk at NOA's claim to neutrality. A. Musgrave, for instance, argues that an anti-realist cannot accept most elements of this "core position" advocated by Fine. In particular, she will probably reject not only the idea of embracing Tarski's referential semantics which was originally intended to illuminate our (realist) conception of truth but also scientists' opinion that electrons do exist. Consequently, Musgrave maintains, although Fine's position is acceptable, it can be accepted probably as a realist position, not a neutral one. I agree with Musgrave that many anti-realists (of sorts) would find it very difficult to sympathize with such a core position. Perhaps it is fair to say that while Fine seems liberal enough to allow the realist to *add* her correspondence-truth or external objects to the core position, he fails to notice that the anti-realist would presumably demand to take something away from it—most notably, the Tarskian elements and certain claims about existence. Of course, one then doubts NOA's success in arriving at a common point, after all these additions and detractions. Furthermore, it is rather implausible to suggest, as Fine clearly does, that NOA is uncontaminated by salient philosophical commitments. And it is questionable that such an "unphilosophical" attitude is what the scientists need—let alone the philosophers.[45] Another philosopher, P. Kitcher, finds NOA elusive: "in his attack on realism, Fine seems to become an antirealist, and in rejection of antirealism, he appears to become a realist."[46] This, I believe, is an eloquent statement of the central problem of NOA. Therefore, I maintain that Fine's project fails: as long as NOA pretends to be a "neutral" or "pure" attitude which strives to please all parties of the dispute, it is a neverland.

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[41] *Ibid.*, pp. 35-36.
[42] Davidson 1986a, p. 309.
[43] Rorty 1986, p. 355. See fn. 61.

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[44] See Fine 1986 and 1996.

Regardless of its success, however, it is misleading to represent the neutralist attempts such as NOA and Davidson's truth-based semantics devised to serve the purposes of interpreters of natural languages as tackling or addressing the same philosophical question. Davidson does not seem to have any exclusively ontological concerns (including the formulation of neutral metaphysical positions) and takes truth as a basic semantic notion in interpretation instead of an analyzable entity. He arguably has certain realist *tendencies*, rather than a neutral standpoint, since his truth-based semantics stand in contrast with that of Dummett for whom the realist (i.e., nonepistemic) truth conditions cannot enlighten how we understand statements. In fact, Davidson has recently tried to emphasize the realist side of his theory:

> Rorty may be justified in calling me a quietist with respect to truth, since I reject correspondence theories, don't think the idea of representation can be cashed in, and agree that truth is not a norm in addition to justification. I also disavow all other attempts to treat truth as an epistemic concept.[47]

Despite Davidson's insistence that his account is a relatively "full-blooded" view of truth, the fact remains that propositional truth for him is, curiously, not above and beyond epistemic justification at the normative dimension. This seems to dovetail with Norris's claim that the account offered by Davidson makes propositional truth dependent upon the beliefs and interpretations of the human agents, hence conflicting the most essential realist premise that a truth-bearer can be true even in the absence of *particular* epistemic, doxastic, or semantic states and actions.

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[45] Musgrave 1996, pp. 58-60. As Fine himself admits (1996, pp. 30-34), scientists often do have strong philosophical commitments which typically influence their work to a large extent. It is a moot point that they either can achieve or actually need the protection of NOA.

[46] Kitcher 1993b, p. 134.

[47] Davidson 1999, p. 18.

I think Davidson vacillates between a realist conception of truth and a verificationist one while believing that he belongs to the first camp. In "The Structure and Content of Truth" he renounces both the (traditional) correspondence and the coherence theories of truth. He certainly does not deny that truth is a property that some sentences have and some do not.[48] It is not entirely clear whether Davidson is really trying to reduce propositional truth to the "attitude of holding true" or just placing the latter to the center of his theory of meaning and interpretation, and subscribing to some truth-based semantics.[49] Faced with this puzzling situation, C. Norris, for example, argued that despite the fact that Davidson wished to offer a substantial and enlightening account of truth appropriating Tarski's theory, he ultimately fell back to some sort of psychologism that hinges upon the notion of the "attitude of holding true."[50] Furthermore, for Davidson, there is no fact of the matter about which charitable interpretation is correct in a given situation. Even though Davidson tries hard to distance himself from the MRists, internal realists, *and* anti-ARists like Dummett,[51] it seems that he has a larger foot on the anti-realist camp than the realist. There is, I submit, little doubt that Davidson embraces the realist idea that the world exists independently of the cognizers. On the alethic side, however, Davidson is seen—as Malpas puts it aptly—as an "idiosyncratic realist" at best.[52] I will explain further why I do not, strictly speaking, consider Davidson as an alethic realist in Chapter Six, after formulating my own conception of AR.

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[48] *Ibid.*, p. 17.
[49] See, for example, Davidson 1990, p. 323.
[50] Norris 1997, p. 6.
[51] Davidson 1990, p. 298, p. 305.
[52] Malpas 1992, p. 6.

CHAPTER FIVE

In Defense of Scheme-based Semantics

5.1. Davidson and Language

According to Davidson, once we reject the idea that our evidence for propositional truths can come from uninterpreted sources, there is no room "left for a dualism of scheme and content."[1] Thus, we cannot make sense of the claim that different schemes or languages divide up the world in such fundamentally different ways that it may be impossible to maintain communication between certain cultures or to translate one language to another. Davidson believes that the grammatical or conceptual resources of all languages are essentially the same and that this is a compelling reason to think that interpretation across language is never radically problematic. Speakers of any natural language *must* be able to describe the world accurately to themselves for the most part and also communicate their beliefs and intentions to one another successfully in verbal acts. Since it is a largely shared feature of human communication that agents show their assent or dissent to (the truth of) sentences in given circumstances, one cannot convincingly argue that the conceptual schemes or natural languages actually separate human beings from each other with respect to verbal communication once and for all. The central notion for a theory of meaning, viz., truth, is what enables us to overcome not only the dichotomy of scheme and content but also that of subject and object.

One remarkable and somewhat shocking corollary of Davidson's holism, anti-empiricism, and quasi-behaviorism is that

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[1] Davidson 1985, p. xvii.

> there is no such thing as a language, not if a language is anything like what many philosophers and linguists have supposed. There is therefore no such thing to be learned, mastered, or born with. We must give up the idea of a clearly defined shared structure which language-users acquire and then apply to cases.[2]

This idea deserves a closer scrutiny. According to a common picture we have about interpretation, the agents enter communication with a more or less determined worldview, a background or (in Davidsonian terms) the "prior theory" which is contrasted with the "passing theory" in the following way:

> For the hearer, the prior theory expresses how he is prepared in advance to interpret an utterance of the speaker, while the passing theory is how he *does* interpret the utterance. For the speaker, the prior theory is what he *believes* the interpreter's prior theory to be, while his passing theory is the theory he *intends* the interpreter to use.[3]

It is the passing theory that really matters for the purposes of an actual case of interpretation. Given Davidson's holism and theory of meaning and verbal communication, the prior theories are mostly irrelevant and thus their function in interpretation should not be overemphasized. The passing theories are derived by the interpreter's "wit, luck, and wisdom" from his personal linguistic resources such as grammar, private vocabulary, and capability of conveying his intentions, desires, and beliefs. This is obviously another way for Davidson to make his crucial point that the alleged relativism due to incommensurable schemes of concepts is in fact a pseudo-problem. Davidson's account hinges on a dynamic characterization of the verbal exchange between a speaker and a listener in that "[w]hat makes conversation possible is a theory that steadily evolves in the course of conversation."[4] This fact also relates to Davidson's resistance to representing language as something that can be adequately understood in isolation from the verbal performance of human agents in interpretation.

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[2] Davidson 1986b, p. 446.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 442.

[4] LePore 1986, p. 25.

As LePore observes, language, mind, and action are inextricably entwined in the Davidsonian theory of meaning and communication.[5]

5.2. The Very Idea of Conceptual Schemes

But what is the exact nature and function of conceptual schemes? The pertinent literature suggests that they are basically *either* ways of organizing experience *or* determinate worldviews, languages, and perspectives which fit and/or reflect the mind-independent reality.[6] The roots of the former idea are traced back to Kant's universal categories of understanding which are distinct from, and uninformed by, the content of human cognition or experience. The latter, on the other hand, can be characterized by a metaphor of "fitting" according to which a language or worldview (wholly or partly) fits the experiential evidence. As I have discussed, Davidson maintains that the organizer metaphor loses its credibility once we disabuse ourselves of the idea that the third dogma of empiricism can reasonably survive the other two destroyed by Quine; and the fitting metaphor is deemed unconvincing in light of Davidson's general philosophy of meaning and interpretation: if one defining characteristic of a conceptual scheme (i.e., a natural language) is its being mostly true, such a scheme cannot be what really separates speakers of different languages from each other since propositional truth (or, rather, the attitude of holding true and displaying assent behavior) is a common characteristic of all language, translation, and interpretation. The correct conclusion to be drawn from this is not that there is one grand scheme common to all languages and cultures but that the whole idea of conceptual schemes is a myth "[f]or if we cannot intelligibly say that schemes are different, neither can we intelligibly say that they are one."[7]

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[5] *Ibid.*, p. 26.
[6] See, e.g., Davidson 1985, p. 183, p. 191; Davidson 1989, p. 161; Malpas 1992, p. 195.
[7] Davidson 1985, p. 198.

It is doubtful, however, that the contemporary proponents of the scheme-based semantics intend their interpretation of the concept of a conceptual scheme to fall within either that of *a whole language* (Carnap) or *a collection of true sentences* (Quine).[8] First of all, as Malpas notes, if conceptual schemes are to be equated with languages themselves, it seems right to ask what philosophical purpose those schemes really serve in theorization.[9] Such an identification would render the whole idea of a conceptual scheme redundant or trivial and one may wonder if it sheds any light upon the issue at hand. So it seems unlikely that the representation of conceptual schemes as languages themselves holds the promise of standing out as a—let alone the most—cogent construal in the present context. The other alternative mentioned by Davidson is that a conceptual scheme is a set of true sentences in a given language. M. Lynch and I. Hacking have explicitly argued that such a description is certainly not an adequate characterization of the underlying idea of the scheme-based semantics. Hacking, for example, takes conceptual schemes as "sets of sentences that are candidates for truth or falsehood."[10] Therefore, *contra* Quine and Davidson, a conceptual scheme is defined in terms of "what counts as true-or-false." Hacking's whole argument capitalizes on the notion of "styles of reasoning" rather than that of a language's fitting, confronting, or corresponding to the world. His account yields the result, if I interpret Hacking correctly, that two English sentences "snow is white" and "snow is green" would exemplify (or pertain to, be generated within the framework of) *the same* conceptual scheme despite the fact that only one of these statements is true. The force of this argument can be felt better if we consider such false sentences as "Argon has an atomic weight of 59.948" or "Richard I was a coward." Sentences of the first kind can only be produced within the theoretical scheme of modern chemistry and the second sentence makes sense only within a moral system whose discursive domain contains the concepts of cowardice and bravery. The crucial point is that such sentences "represent" certain cultural, linguistic, scientific or metaphysical schemes in/through which they are "brought into being," *regardless of the fact* that they are false—and, hence, fail to "fit" the actual states of affairs of the world.

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[8] *Ibid.*, p. 194. See also Lynch 1998, p. 35; Hacking 1998, p. 329.

[9] Malpas 1992, p. 195.

[10] Hacking 1998, p. 333.

This way of putting the matter also goes in line with Lynch's version of conceptual schemes. He contends that such schemes

> are *not sets of declarative sentences but networks of concepts*. It follows that an alien scheme will not be a set of sentences taken to be "largely true" . . . . [A]ccording to my understanding, our conceptual scheme is only one element of a *worldview*, [i.e.,] an organic whole whose parts—one of which I am calling a conceptual scheme—can best be understood in relation to their functions inside that whole.[11]

A conceptual scheme is like a functioning, healthy eye: all individual components of the organ work concordantly in experiencing visual perception. The crucial idea Lynch introduces in the above passage is that conceptual schemes are not free-floating semantic entities; they are integral parts of—and, in a way, abstractions from—our worldviews which encompass not just the beliefs and concepts we possess, but also our interests, values, and various social practices. Consequently, a worldview is akin to a "form of life" à la Wittgenstein. Lynch maintains, in a way reminiscent of Hacking's argument on "styles of reasoning," that our concepts undergo a lot of modification in the course of history and that some new notions are created while some others are dropped from ordinary discourse. Thus, there is apparently no sound reason to suppose that our conceptual world is very similar, for example, to those of the ancient people.

Malpas and Lynch locate one source of the problem of Davidson's truth-based semantics in the latter's verificationism and his misrepresentation of the central idea of a scheme-based semantics. According to their analysis, Davidson takes incommensurability as meaning untranslatability and tries to make a compelling case out of the ensuing relativism which he attributes to Kuhn, Feyerabend, Whorf, and, in general, the defenders of conceptual schemes.[12] Davidson thinks that an alien scheme would be one which is, by definition, both largely correct and cannot be translated to our language. This is an unacceptable position for him because our concept of understanding cannot be divorced from that of translation. For many critics, however, this is a rather dubious sort of verificationism for we can perfectly imagine the existence of numerous conceptual systems which might remain beyond our powers of translation. Furthermore, Lynch argues that Davidson's position is a *non-sequitur*. Davidson assumes not only the principle of charity, the interdependence of belief and meaning, and the tenet that translation is a precondition of understanding from the interpreter's point of view, but, more importantly, that *translatability* is the defining characteristic of *what it is to be a language*. The upshot of the Davidsonian argument is that it is incoherent to hold there may be languages that cannot be translated to certain others. This, of course, does not disprove the point of the proponents of the scheme-based semantics; it only shows that *if* languagehood—and understanding a language—are predicated on the concept of translatability, there cannot be untranslatable languages or "alien schemes" which will strictly lie beyond our grasp. But this is, after all, the very point called into question by those who have important misgivings about the Davidsonian truth-based semantics.

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[11] Lynch 1998, p. 49, p. 51.

Let us try to get a better understanding why philosophers like Lynch find Davidson's verificationism unacceptable. In "On the Very Idea of a Conceptual Scheme," Davidson anticipates the above-described objection to his theory. His thesis, to repeat, is that

> it seems unlikely that we can intelligibly attribute attitudes . . . to a speaker unless we can translate his words into ours. . . [But my critic might argue that] we can imagine a language so different from English as to resist totally translation to it.[13]

Take two hypothetical alien languages, Saturnian and Plutonian. Suppose, with the defender of the possibility of untranslatable languages, that Saturnian is translatable to

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[12] *Ibid.*, pp. 52-53; Malpas 1992, pp. 200-202.

[13] Davidson 1985, p. 186.

English, Plutonian is translatable to Saturnian, but Plutonian cannot be translated to English. Then, Davidson asks, how can a speaker of English *recognize* that a Saturnian is performing the act of translating the speech of a Plutonian into its language? The Davidsonian answer to such a question seems that either the Plutonian language is actually (or ultimately) translatable to English, hence invalidating the relativists point of view, or else what the Plutonian agent is doing cannot be described as meaningful speech behavior as we understand the term. In either case the incommensurability thesis fails.

I think the critics of Davidson are right when they insist that this line of reasoning cannot hold water. Suppose it is true that we could never verify that the behavior displayed by some Plutonians actually indicates the presence of a different conceptual scheme. In what way does this demonstrate that there is no alternative, i.e., Plutonian, scheme? Does this not merely show the fact that we can conceptualize the external reality by means of our conceptual tools but not with those of the Plutonians? The Davidsonian point is

> analogous to saying that there is nothing that it is to be a bat, since there is no way for us to verify that there is some way of experiencing the world, distinct from our own, that the bat enjoys and we do not. [But] we can conceive *that* certain general types of states of affairs exist (or possibly exist) without knowing anything about them in detail—even without being *able* to know about them in detail.[14]

As Lynch notes, Davidson also misses the fact that understanding a cognizer who belongs to another culture or language is actually a matter of degree. We must not lose sight of the fact that the real or normal instances of incommensurability in which we are interested do not take place at an intergalactic level and, in this sense, Davidson misconstrues the philosophical agenda of a typical proponent of the scheme-based semantics. The latter would draw our attention, for example, to the fact that speakers of English and French presumably have, in general, little difficulty in translation whereas an

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[14] Lynch 1998, p. 52. Bruce Hunter drew my attention to the fact that in this passage Lynch seems to run the conceptual problem together with the epistemological. I think the issue here is essentially a conceptual one, i.e., about our ability to conceive of different ways of framing reality.

English interpreter may have considerable problems in her attempts to understand a Hopi speaker. In a similar vein, a chemist would probably have less difficulty in grasping the statements of a biologist than those of the magician of a secluded tribe. Therefore, it is not among the claims of a defender of the scheme-based semantics that we conceptually or linguistically live in isolated worlds or "islands" with little or no interaction with the other languages, cultures, and life styles. Rather, it is a claim about, to employ a Wittgensteinean terminology, a multiplicity of forms of life, worldviews or styles of reasoning which exhibit certain family resemblances or partial similarities among themselves as well as remarkable differences.

5.3. Verificationism, Quasi-Behaviorism, and the Problem of Institutional Facts

Davidson believes that one advantage of employing a Tarskian schema for determining the truth conditions of our statements is that the normative or institutional facts do not pose a special threat anymore to a theory (or definition) of truth. He suggests, in a somewhat obscure manner, that when a T-sentence is provided for Bardot's being good (i.e., "Bardot is good" is true in English if and only if Bardot is good), the predicament or mystery about the evaluative nature of the situation is not solved, dissolved, or just ignored but, rather, gets "transferred"—assuming that the "questions of logical grammar" is settled—from the object language to the metalanguage which is used to translate that sentence.[15] In this sense, there is apparently no reason to treat the so-called normative facts as distinct from the descriptive or observation ones. As Rorty succinctly notes, "[f]or Davidson . . . there is goodness out there in exactly the same trivial sense in which there is redness out there."[16] The idea that the alethic "mysteries" are transferred to the meta-level regardless of the normative character of our sentences suggests that an answer can be found within the framework of Davidson's philosophy of language and meaning to the question of what happens to such mysteries once they are moved to the level of metalanguage in which we talk about the truth of our statements. We know that in the case of a sentence like "snow is white" the Davidsonian interpreter attempts to figure out the beliefs and meanings of a speaker using his wisdom, wit, luck, certain charitable assumptions and, most fundamentally, *through observation of the agent's verbal behavior*. It appears now that this approach is not restricted to such directly observational cases like an object's being white but finds its application in *all* instances of the truth predicate of a natural language. To use Davidson's own example, an agent who asserts that "perseverance keeps honor bright" typically not only means and believes in what she says but also intends her hearer to construe these words correctly in an actual case of interpretation or translation. According to Davidson, this example is essentially no different from the translation of the utterance "snow is white": in both cases our ability to translate the speaker's words to our language is the key element in understanding how we can successfully attribute both complex (e.g., evaluational) and simple (e.g., empirical) attitudes to speakers. There is no issue of "grasping another's scheme"; all the interpreter needs is the ability to observe behavior and a sufficiently good dictionary—*even* for the interpretation of a normative statement like "perseverance keeps honor bright."[17]

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[15] Davidson 1985, p. 31.

[16] Rorty 1986, p. 351. He later adds: "the contrast which Dummett draws between, e.g., realism about tables and anti-realism about values makes no sense for [a holist] like Davidson." (pp. 352-353)

There is a major issue here about Davidson's "primitive" or "quasi-behavioristic"—to use Norris's (1997) words—approach to meaning, truth, and interpretation. We must be careful, however, not to draw an unfairly simplistic picture of either Davidson or the greatest influence on him on this matter, to wit, Quine. Neither of these philosophers can be labeled as a behaviorist if this term is to be understood as in the parlance of experimental psychology. Quine refers to his position as linguistic nominalism and makes it clear that in psychology one *may* or *may not* be a behaviorist. *But in linguistics*, he adds, one has no choice but to take the observation of behavior as the ultimate means or tool by which we translate and understand others' utterances. Thus, from a semantic point of view, Quine's position *is* a kind of behaviorism in that his field linguist is supposed to "translate meanings via observable reaction to stimuli."[18] Davidson's position, on the other hand, is considerably subtler. He has always been rather explicit about his objection to the idea of reductionism regarding intentional states, and he refrained from getting closer to what may be called a behaviorist position.[19] Davidson says that he is not after some "behavioristic or verificationist foundations" but is attempting to make a case for the extensionalistic viewpoint that

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[17] Davidson 1985, p. 186, p. 189.

> what has to do with correct interpretation, meaning, and truth conditions is necessarily based on available evidence. . . . [L]anguage is intrinsically social. This does not entail that truth and meaning can be *defined* in terms of observable behavior, or that it is "nothing but" observable behavior; but it does imply that meaning is entirely determined by observable behavior, even readily observable behavior.[20]

To give an example, it is an interpretative condition, clearly recognized by Davidson, that the interpreter *must* have the appropriate mental states and attitude toward a speaker she is trying to understand. We must, nonetheless, not lose sight of the fact that for Davidson the radical interpreter can gain knowledge of the content of the speaker's mental states solely on the basis of verbal behavior.[21] According to Rorty, Davidson and Quine are in agreement in that "a theory of meaning for a language is what comes out of empirical research into linguistic behavior. . . ."[22] Davidson has recently provided some elucidation regarding the exact character of his account. He remarks that even though he does not strive to reduce the intensional notions to nonintensional ones, his theory—which is inspired by the Bayesian approach—is nonetheless

> an important step in the direction of reducing complex and relatively theoretical intensional concepts [like belief] to intensional concepts that *in application are closer to publicly observable behavior.*[23]

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[18] Alcoff 1996, p. 84.

[19] Davidson 1990, p. 314, p. 319; Lepore 1986, pp. 4-5, *vide* especially fn. 2.

[20] Davidson 1990, p. 314.

[21] Ludwig and Zeglen 1999, p. 9. It can also be added that even though Davidson recognizes the reality of intentional states, he raises an issue about what they actually do for a semantic theory. (Farrell 1994, p. 90)

[22] Rorty 1986, p. 352.

[23] Davidson 1990, p. 317, italics mine.

Davidson thinks that the latter sort of concepts are supplied by the "subjective probabilities and relative desirabilities" of sentences, as described by the work of Richard Jeffrey. Consequently, Davidson seems to have managed to find a way to tie our intensional concepts with what is available to an interpreter in terms of behavior—verbal and otherwise.

I agree with those who believe that the Davidsonian account is essentially (or ultimately) a quasi-behaviorism in its refusal to go beyond observable behavior in theory construction and its undermining the prior theories or background views in interpretation, translation, and, broadly speaking, in *understanding* the "other." As mentioned above, Davidson does not believe that our normative facts require a special theoretical treatment and that his account which combines the best intuitions of Quine and Tarski is capable of dealing with different sorts of states of affairs across the board. Davidson nonetheless fails to see that the Quienean and Tarskian elements in his theory of interpretation and meaning actually cripple his account seriously when it comes to providing a viable story of human agents and their conceptual world—and this is prominently the case with, but certainly not restricted to, our normative or institutional facts. I will argue that there are good reasons to believe that most (if not all) of our phenomenal states of affairs are substantially shaped and fashioned by something like conceptual and cultural schemes. It is virtually impossible, generally speaking, to get beyond a rather superficial and inadequate characterization of an agent's "behavior" if the interpreter does not have *some* prior acquaintance and grasp of that agent's values and cultural practices. Davidson seems to miss this point—and not accidentally—because his theory suffers inevitably from the defects of its philosophical procreators, to wit, the Quinean and Tarskian perspectives:[24] Tarski intended his theory merely to work for formalized languages and his optimism about the theory's promise of enlightening our common concept of the correspondence truth was unfounded. As for Quine, he had nothing but immediately observable situations in his mind—like a rabbit running in the close vicinity of a human agent and causing certain useful stimulations on her nerve endings—when he formulated his theory of radical translation. It is, hence, not surprising to find out that the Davidsonian account is not theoretically well-equipped in the first place to deal with anything outside such immediately observable cases as a speaker's exhibiting assent behavior to an empirical statement in the presence of a rabbit or snow. That it is a misguided and inexpedient semantic program can be vividly seen, I think, if we distance ourselves for a moment from the analytic philosophers' favorite sentences like "snow is white," "there goes a rabbit," etc., and situate the discussion in a broader discursive perspective. Consider the following examples:

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[24] Incidentally, this brings to mind the all-purpose Russellian dictum "choose your parents carefully."

(1) Typically Westerners find it very difficult to understand the master-pupil relationship in many religious or mystic Eastern traditions—such as that which can be found in the circles of Khorasan Dervishes (e.g., Hacı Bektaş-ı Veli), Mevlevi Sufis (e.g., Mevlana Jalaluddin Rumi), and the Buddhist monks and "blamas." Given the Western cultural and moral standards, their behavior and the way they treat each other are often incomprehensible. It is not clear at all how a Davidsonian approach can illuminate the understanding of meanings and situations involved in such examples. (2) Many sacred or metaphysical rituals and celebrations of the Eastern cultures often seem only entertaining in a touristic way to the outsiders. In certain cases of radical disparateness with respect to the pertinent cultural values, perspectives, or forms of life, only after *living with*—as opposed to merely "watching from a distance" or "reading about"[25]—the members of such a community can an outsider begin to get a grasp of the hidden meanings behind the words, actions, and states of mind of the "other."[26] (3) The powwow dances and songs of

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[25] In a similar context, Alcoff (1996) uses the wonderful phrase "the *National Geographic* attitude" toward other cultures.

[26] My favorite real-life example is the following: One of the Western commentators of the movie *A Voice From Heaven* (1999)—directed by Giuseppe Asaro, documenting the life of the Pakistani singer Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan and the mystic tradition of qawwali—has described in an interview the singers' ecstatic religious experience by saying "I think they were having a good time." It goes without saying that given the intensely religious or mystical nature of the aforementioned experience, this is a rather "inaccurate" statement. But the critical point here is *not* that this is just a cavalier oversimplification or an understatement; nor is it, in its essence, a reflection of a difficulty of translation to Western languages. Rather, the commentator's remark is due to the total absence of a cultural situation and a state of mind in the Western way(s) of life.

Aboriginal peoples make little sense, other than some kind of noisy and colorful entertainment, to the outsiders while there are, of course, rich stories and an altogether *different metaphysic* behind powwow—which literally means "he dreams" in Algonquian.[27] (4) A statement like "Jesus (or Truth) sets you free" (John 8: 31-36; Romans 6: 18), which is familiar and comprehensible to the most members of the Western societies, means almost nothing to those who are not acquainted with the Christian notions, even if they understand the English words in that sentence. This is, again, not a difficulty in translation; it is an inability to grasp a certain situation which can only be understood within a conceptual, historical, religious framework. (5) Foreign movies can be excellent examples not only of translation difficulties but, more relevant for my purposes, for the incomprehensibility of certain situations. The present author vividly remembers watching a finely subtitled Chinese movie about village life without understanding most of the "situations" involved in it.[28]

My aim here is not to offer a discussion in cultural studies. These nonscientific examples are meant to convey the idea that, *contra* Davidson, the mere observation of behavior (linguistic or otherwise) accompanied by charitable assumptions regarding a speaker's belief system is, for the most cases of interpretation, not sufficient to get an adequate understanding of the speaker's world (of states of affairs) and the sentences she holds true. In many cases, the statements to be translated and understood involve, as a matter of fact, abstract concepts and cultural elements. Of course, this fact may elude the analytic philosophers especially when they tend toward restricting their sentential repertoire to immediately observable cases. Such a tendency is a misleading one because most of our statements actually bear, in a rather straightforward way, signs of the pertinent culture and its idiosyncratic social components, and they come with various communally recognizable marks—as I have tried to exemplify above. Thus, it is virtually impossible to give an extensionalistic (in particular, behaviorist or Davidsonian) characterization of cultural states of affairs and their representation.[29]

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[27] See *How Can One Sell the Air?* edited by E. Gifford and R. M. Cook. The book contains Chief Seattle's memorable response to the "white chief's offer" to buy their land in 1854.

[28] Thus, it makes a lot of sense to me to hear from a Chinese colleague that when the Chinese watch movies like Bernardo Bertulicci's *The Last Emperor* (1987) produced for the Western viewers, they typically do not get the impression that those movies are really about Chinese people because the actors—despite being of Chinese origin—apparently behave and speak in a way comprehensible to their "intended audience" only.

It may, of course, be argued that such an objection must have a limited scope. There is, the argument goes, a clear distinction between institutional and brute facts and that the Davidsonian program is unproblematically suitable for the analysis of the latter sort. This rebuttal is bound to fail. Even in those cases where the extension of a given particular proposition or statement is uncontroversial across various languages, we may not get exactly the same states of affairs for that particular statement when uttered by different people belonging to different linguistic communities. Consider such "brute facts" as "there is an eagle on top of the mountain" or "there is a cow in the field."[30] It is clear to me that the meanings conveyed by such statements would differ significantly depending on the religious or metaphysical background (or in Davidsonian terms the "prior theories") of the speaker(s), and this is because of the fact that the intensional aspect of the terms 'cow' and 'eagle' varies greatly across different religious/cultural practices, forms of life, and ways of conceptualizing the reality. This does not mean that different conceptual schemes are isolated and incommensurable units, but rather that there are perspicuous discrepancies as well as overlaps among different ways of conceptualizing or "framing" the world. In other words, we do not need to postulate distinct (Goodmanian) worlds for cognizers belonging to different worldviews in order to make sense of a scheme-based semantics. There is one reality but more than one way to think and talk about its states of affairs.[31]

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[29] Of course, we must not lose sight of the fact that Davidson has a holistic understanding of evidence and, thus, it is not the case that he defends the idea of "interpretation on the basis of isolated observations." However, it remains to be explained how this fact goes in line with his approach to "prior theories."

[30] The latter example can be found, in a slightly different form, in Lynch 1998, p. 40.

[31] Why this position is different from the traditional realist one will become clearer in the next chapter.

5.4. Why did Experimental Psychologists Abandon Behaviorism?

One central thesis of this chapter is that Davidson's theory suffers mostly on its verificationist and quasi-behaviorist grounds. It is my conviction that the strength of this claim cannot be fully appreciated unless we briefly review some of the important methodological reasons why most empirical psychologists today think that behaviorism is in general an obsolete theory. My treatment will be a concise and tendentious one, and I will talk only about those aspects of the matter which have a direct bearing on our discussion thus far.

It is a well-known fact that behaviorism was the dominant trend in psychology during the first half of the previous century. Reacting mainly to introspectionism, psychologists like J. B. Watson determined observable behavior as their legitimate object of study and dismissed hypothetical constructs such as memory or mind on the grounds that their existence could never be demonstrated by empirical methods. Through this approach, the human mental system was taken as a black box about which nothing could be stated. Behaviorism was influential for about four decades, and people in this field supposed that only via such a restrictive strategy could they promote psychology to the glorious state of physics. The famous behaviorist B. F. Skinner strongly believed that the concept of mind as a separate faculty was unscientific. Watson, on the other hand, held that the environment can impress almost anything upon a human infant. The first objections to behaviorism were raised by some of the insiders themselves who believed that the mere investigation of the ways stimuli and responses get connected by organisms through associations would not suffice for an adequate understanding of those agents. Behaviorists like Tolman and Hull were among the first to make references to the internal factors responsible for or giving rise to overt behavior. They realized that the behaviorist strategies were definitely not helpful in dealing with such phenomena as expectancy or anticipation, and it does not come as a surprise that the behaviorists were not very comfortable with issues about perception, human memory, and attention.[32] Research on these matters almost came to a halt due to the conservative nature of the behaviorist program.

Around the middle of the century, N. Chomsky's formidable attack on Skinner set the stage for a different sort of attitude toward the human subject, and Neisser's 1967 book *Cognitive Psychology* heralded the coming of what is known as the "cognitive era" in experimental psychology. Today although some of the behaviorist techniques are still employed in clinical psychology or in psychology of learning, the (traditional) behaviorist view concerning how to study the underlying mechanism of human cognition is commonly acknowledged to be seriously defective. It is of course understandable that behaviorists wanted to get rid of the arbitrariness caused by the frivolous stipulation of hypothetical entities in relation to human cognitive system. They nevertheless missed the fact that one could not go very far by refusing to study the source of all behavior.

The contrast between a narrowly behaviorist approach and a cognitive one is in fact remarkable. Cognitive psychology aims to

> explain how the human mind comes to know things about the world around it, about other people, and about itself, and how it uses this knowledge to perform an impressive range of tasks such as remembering, speaking, performing skilled actions, solving problems and reasoning.[33]

Cognitive psychologists believe that their field of study is a branch of science for the kind of phenomenal regularities they ordinarily uncover are, strictly speaking, law-like. They do not try to undermine the role of behavior; rather, they conduct controlled experiments in order to unravel the inner processes behind observable behavior and to enlighten certain significant elements of our mental world (e.g., attention, pattern recognition, memory, organization of knowledge, language, reasoning, and problem solving). It must also be noted that they do not take mind as an existent entity but as a set of phenomena acting like an organized system. There are two main approaches to cognitive psychology: the *information-processing* approach and the *connectionist* approach, and their common denominator is to develop "computational models of cognition" to shed light on our mental processes.[34] In this sense, the task of the cognitive psychologist is essentially not different from—to use Neisser's analogy—that of a software engineer trying to make out how a computer has been programmed.

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[32] Matlin and Foley 1997, p. 7; Klatzky 1975, p. 2; Pashler 1998, p. 6.
[33] Hampson and Morris 1996, pp. 1-2.

In a now classic book on empirical psychology, B. J. Underwood stated that phenomena are the basic data for the working psychologist. He wrote "the basic purpose of research in psychology is to discover phenomena, variables which affect them, and the lawfulness of the effects."[35] The crucial matter here is, of course, how we are to understand the notion of a "phenomenon." As I will try to explain, the transition from a behaviorist approach to cognitivism actually stands nothing short of a textbook case of paradigm shift in that it completely revolutionized the way experimental psychologists viewed the nature and identity of a psychological phenomenon.

Visual perception constitutes an excellent example of how a cognitive approach can offer a strikingly novel perspective with respect to the traditional issues of experimental psychology. Cognitive psychologists take perception as a process which involves considerable amount of interpretation and organization. Accordingly, human agents' prior knowledge of their surroundings substantially shape and guide the perceptual processes. Perception is actually much more than simply putting together the raw data received from the external reality: it invariably involves *bottom-up* (or data-driven) processes and *top-down* (concept-driven) processes to make sense of the objects that appear in the organism's visual field—which suggests that perception cannot be understood in isolation from the way we store information in memory and represent the world to ourselves.[36] Illusions are probably the best and most fascinating examples of such processes.[37] Experimental psychologists widely believe that illusions are the result of some "nonconscious cognitive adjustment" performed by our visual system in order to enable itself to *deal with a problem* it faces. The famous Ponzo illusion, for example, can be explained by "misapplied constancy scaling," that is, a misapplication of the rule that if two retinal images are the same size and one is "known" to be more distant than the other, then the distant object is "judged" to be bigger. According to Gregory, "this mechanism which helps us to maintain stable size perception in the real three-dimensional world could lead us to misinterpret two-dimensional drawings."[38] This example neatly illustrates the plausibility and explanatory power of the cognitivist thesis that in every single instance of perception we impose our world knowledge (verbal and nonverbal) upon the distal stimulus in order to make sense of it. Besides, numerous experiments and case studies seem to support such cognitive theses. For instance, subjects who see the world for the first time after a corneal graft operation have enormous difficulties in perceiving and dealing with the environment. Initially lacking depth perception and object-size constancy, they often try to reach out and grab the distant objects such as trees and cars. Rookes and Willson cite one such case of a 52 year old patient referred to as S. B. They write that

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[34] Best 1995, p. 20.
[35] Underwood 1957, p. 14
[36] Matlin and Foley 1997, p. 12; Rookes and Wilson 2000, pp. 14-15.

> S. B. was not like a new-born baby learning to see, because he has already had a huge store of knowledge gained through touch and this assisted him in interpreting novel visual stimuli. He continued to prefer touch to vision and often, with his eyes shut, would touch unfamiliar objects; only then could he see them when he opened his eyes. Sadly, like many other people reported in cataract cases, S. B. became severely depressed because he found his new visual world ugly and confusing.[39]

One important implication of this case is that learning and cognitive background are a decisive factor in ordinary visual perception. To appreciate this point better, let us examine an experiment which shows how perception of the same event can be vastly different across different worldviews or cognitive schemas. In the famous experiment of trapezoidal window illusion conducted by A. Ames, a two-dimensional trapezoid is painted in such a way as to give the 3D impression that it is a rectangular window at a slant. Then the subjects (monocularly) observe it to rotate around its vertical axis. When the smaller end of the trapezoid comes closer to the observer, it is perceived to be still smaller than the other end. At this point, the perceptual system of the observer makes the assumption that, since in the course of rotation that end appears to be smaller, it is moving away from the observer. As a result, the subject perceives the smaller end of the window as moving away from her in spite of the fact that it is coming closer. [40] Once again, this is a demonstration of the fact that perception is a nonconscious decision-making process which is largely informed by our doxastic and epistemic background and the way we represent the reality to ourselves.

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[37] For the famous "moon illusion," for example, see Rock 1975, pp. 39-47; Matlin and Foley 1997, pp. 208-210.

[38] Rookes and Wilson 2000, p. 58.

[39] *Ibid.*, p. 89.

Cognitive psychologists also study how visual perceptions vary across different cultures. It has been found out that the members of several African cultures (like Bete, Suku, and Bushmen) and a group of American Navajo Indians are less susceptible to the Müller-Lyer paradox, and this fact seems to result from "little exposure to rectangular objects in three-dimensional space such as occurs in more carpentered, technologically advanced, environments."[41] A similar point can be made for Ames's trapezoidal window illusion described above. When that experiment was made with the members of an African tribe who did not have anything resembling windows with corners, they did not get captured by the illusion and perceived the motion of the trapezoid "veridically"—using this term as in the parlance of cognitive psychology. This is explained by saying that since they imposed different world knowledge upon the distal stimulus, they perceived the event in an entirely different fashion than the members of our culture. Although such experiments are often beset by methodological problems (e.g., poor sampling methods, bias, difficulties related to conducting controlled experiments), they nonetheless indicate that cultural factors definitely play a role in perception.

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[40] Rock 1975, pp. 133-136.
[41] Rock 1975, p. 439. See also Rookes and Wilson 2000, p. 58.

The point I have tried to make above regarding visual perception can also be made about learning, attention, memory, and so on. In his 1995 book, *The Psychology of Associative Learning*, D. Shanks points out that the two major problems of traditional behaviorism are:

> (1) learning may occur without any concomitant change in behavior; and
> (2) in many cases it can be established that that organisms do much more than simply acquire new types of behavior.[42]

Along similar lines, the behaviorist cannot easily explain why we are unable to direct our *attention* simultaneously to, say, listening to the radio and reading a book.[43] And lastly, we seem to have no behaviorist alternative to approaching the concept of *memory* via a cognitive (i.e., model-based) study of the ways human agents receive, modify, store, and retrieve information. To give a very simple example, we can easily "encode" a symbol like the letter 'A' in our cognitive system and later remember this particular item kept in the long term memory. That is, the system somehow manages to retain the letter 'A' *in some form*, and then recognize a token of the same type next time it is presented to the system through—presumably—some kind of pattern recognition process. What is the story behind this common but mysterious feat? It is obvious that the answer to this question does not lie in observable behavior or merely at the level of physiological phenomena. Of course, a cognitive process like encoding and retrieving information may in fact be supervenient upon physiological events. This, however, does not mean that an adequate understanding of the human cognitive mechanism can be achieved by means of research in physiology.[44] The contemporary psychologists by and large have come to believe that only what may be called the "software" can be helpful in understanding the higher level mechanisms that operate when, for example, a person recognizes after many years the face of his childhood friend. We need to get into that black box to fully understand the human cognizer and, in doing this, there is no way to eschew mental constructs and models. For instance, psychologists often employ *cognitive maps*, a hypothetical construct which has proven remarkably useful for the purposes of learning theories. Tolman who was the first psychologist to describe this notion clearly thought that organisms gather information, work it over, and

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[42] Shanks 1995, p. 3.

[43] Pashler 1998, p. 2.

[44] Searle (1983) offered a similar argument for our intentional states. Notice the similarities between the claim I make here and the Putnamian argument I have provided in Chapter 3 regarding Armstrong's conflating the ontological and semantic determination in the making of propositional truths.

> [elaborate] into a tentative cognitive-like map of the environment. And it is this tentative map indicating routes and paths and environmental relationships that determines our behavior.[45]

Cognitive maps explain both our ability both to act successfully in our environment *and* to represent it veridically to ourselves. Experiments suggest that even animals are capable of developing such maps; and many instances of learning which cannot be explicated by the aid of the S-R psychology or associationism can be satisfactorily explained using cognitive maps.[46]

The crucial point here is that psychologists employ theoretical terms without any intention of reification. Once this point is conceded, there is no intelligible reason, from the cognitivists viewpoint, to develop a phobia about studying the decision-making processes, their modeling, and the abstract entities such as memory and cognitive maps. We must bear in mind that thanks to such a strategy cognitive psychologists today are able to *explain* and *predict* behavior much better than the behaviorists and offer convincing accounts, *inter alia*, of perception, learning, attention, pattern recognition, and memory.

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[45] Benjafield 1992, p. 173.

[46] See, for example, Shanks 1995, p. 3 for MacFarlane's famous experiment on trained laboratory rats. Such experiments show that there may be learning in the absence of accompanying behavior of the relevant type.

5.5. Concluding Remarks: Back to the Ghost and the Machine?

Quine project of naturalization was, as we have seen, a remarkably and untenably narrow extensionalist program. Even though Davidson's quasi-behaviorism and minimalist semantics are not as objectionable as Quine's reductive physicalism, it promotes the idea of unmediated contact with the world which, from a (linguistic and traditional) Kantian viewpoint, is unacceptable. It appears that Davidson misinterprets the gist of the whole idea of conceptual schemes when, for instance, he states that his opponent seems to defend

> the idea that *any* language distorts reality, which implies that it is only wordlessly if at all that mind comes to grips with things as they really are. This is to conceive language as an inert (though necessarily distorting) medium independent of the human agencies that employ it. . . .[47]

Needless to say, many linguistic Kantians would disown such a description. Putnam, for example, strongly rejects the idea that we could come to contact with reality "only wordlessly" since he obviously finds the whole idea of an in-itself reality repugnant. And for philosophers like Lynch, the suggestion that language is an inert medium is nothing more than a poor representation of their sort of realism (or anti-realism).

Although Davidson occasionally remarks that he opposes mainly the idea of *in principle incommensurability* between languages (and a priori limitations to verbal communication), it is doubtful that his general theory which leans heavily on the concept of passing theories can be helpful in explicating how an agent comes to understand a very different culture or language. I do agree with Davidson that given sufficient time, there can be only a few, if any, foreign cultures or cultural elements that we will earnestly strive to comprehend but utterly fail to. Such an ability or possibility cannot, however, be explained by the work of a meticulous translator, and, more critically, it is not some sort of semantic minimalism but a liberal scheme-based approach that can clarify how communication across different forms of life can be actualized.

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[47] Davidson 1985, p. 185.

Despite the fact that Davidson apparently refrains from embracing a narrowly behavioristic approach to interpretation, meaning, and—broadly—language, his view ultimately amounts to getting rid of the semantic intermediaries including the agent's prior theories and even language itself. Yet, as Norris notes, convergence upon passing theories cannot justifiably constitute a strong basis for verbal communication.[48] It is true that there may be extremely simple cases of communication (e.g., a speaker tries to tell an interpreter that he is hungry) where mere reliance on some shared "passing theory" and behavioral cues may suffice for translation. But it is a highly dubious claim to say that a whole culture or language can be understood this way. Davidson, in his defense, points out that the following interpretative device, among others, may be instrumental in alleviating such worries:

> An interpreter bent on working out a speaker's meaning notes more than what causes assents and dissents; he notes how well placed and equipped the speaker is to observe aspects of his environment, and accordingly gives more weight to some verbal responses than to others.[49]

The problem with this response is that it actually assumes the point it is supposed to make or enlighten. How can a behaviorist interpreter assess the adequacy of the observational powers of a speaker and make certain discriminations among the latter's utterances without sharing to a substantial extent some "prior theory" with him (especially in the case of institutional or normative facts)?[50] Why should we suppose that the interpreter's wit and wisdom generally matches that of the speaker? Davidson admits that his account is aimed mainly at the human cognizers' perceptual beliefs which he takes to be mostly true for the speakers of a natural language.[51] Yet, he claims that his theory can also handle the sentences with more "theoretical" predicates. This is possible because, the argument goes, there are holistic relations among observational and theoretical statements.[52] Davidson nonetheless misses the fact that such relations can only make sense within the agent's scheme of concepts and, hence, they will not be available to a Davidsonian interpreter who is deprived of any prior theories during the process of interpretation. The holistic relations may indeed become transparent to an interpreter in the course of his interaction with another culture, but it is unconvincing to say that such interpretative success can be explicated without recourse to the agents "prior theories" or worldviews.

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[48] Norris 1997, p. 13.

[49] Davidson 1990, p. 321.

[50] It can be asked how Davidson's "prior theories" relate to conceptual schemes or frameworks as understood by linguistic Kantians. The first thing to note is that his "passing theory" is arguably not a theory at all. (Norris 1997, p. 17) And it is most likely that Davidson takes his imagined "prior theory" as the sum total of an agent's world knowledge, understood in a broad sense. The defender of the scheme-based semantics would, naturally, conceive of "background knowledge" as structured and shaped in accordance with *styles* of *reasoning*, *communication*, and "*living*" found in a particular linguistic community. Therefore, despite Davidson's attempts to represent our cognitive background as some inert or lifeless "prior theory," there are strong reasons to believe that he is mistaken on this matter.

Davidson's minimalism in semantics combined with a radical holism yields the result that the whole discourse on semantic intermediaries is otiose and misleading. One motivating idea for this position is that the reification of such notions as schemes endangers our knowledge or understanding of the world and other perspectives. According to Davidson's unrestricted holism and semantic minimalism, conceptual schemes are philosophical idealizations or abstractions from the real instances of human communication which take place in the indeterminate realm of verbal and nonverbal action. It is unlikely, however, that the defenders of the scheme-based semantics will challenge Davidson on the idea that such schemes are theoretical abstractions within the framework of a theory of language and meaning. What they do challenge is the contention that such abstractions have no explanatory power.[53] Contrary to Davidson's claims, the principal reason for retaining such notions is that they supply a valuable set of explanatory tools which a minimized semantics clearly lacks. To put it differently, once that sort of an abstraction has been made, it opens up (or, for the Heideggerianly-inclined,

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[51] Davidson 1999, pp. 18-19.
[52] Davidson 1990, pp. 321-322.
[53] Norris 1997, p. 12; Malpas 1992, p. 203.

unveils) a certain dimension of phenomenal reality which lends itself to philosophical and/or scientific scrutiny. Two prominent examples, as I have explained, are our mental life and cross-cultural communication. Therefore, both the "fitting" and "organizing" metaphors associated with the conceptual schemes—despite bearing some partial truth on the matter—are ultimately inadequate descriptions of the exact nature and function of those semantic entities. Conceptual schemes are best understood as styles of reasoning (Hacking) and as integral parts of worldvievs or the Wittgensteinean forms of life (Lynch).

Davidson thinks that if we have no other choice but impose our own rationality and worldview upon the speaker we are trying to understand, then there cannot be a problem of incommensurability. And the affirmation of the antecedent of this conditional proposition results in a denial of the possibility of incommensurability between languages or schemes. Of course, one philosopher's modus ponens ("proposing method") is another's modus tollens ("removing method"). Given that there *are* certain cases of incommensurability, such as the one encountered by a radical interpreter who finds herself in a radically different culture, we can infer that the answer to the question of understanding the "other" is not simply imposing our own rationality but to find out some ways of stepping into a speaker's "world," construed broadly. There is actually a more fundamental issue underlying Davidson's argument in this context. He contends that

> [t]he possibility of understanding the speech or actions of an agent depends on the existence of *a* fundamentally *rational* pattern, a pattern that must, in general outline, be shared by all rational creatures.[54]

One ought, quite naturally, to concede that there must be significant conceptual overlaps and resemblances across different cultures and styles of reasoning; but it is a moot claim that such styles or schemes spring from one grand Human Rationality that prevails throughout the history and across various cultures. This is not to say that relativism wins the battle but rather that, contrary to Davidson's claims, his quasi-behaviorism and holism cannot, in general, adequately explicate our grasp of another culture and how its members conceptualize the phenomenal world and act in it. To give an example from the Chinese culture, it seems rather unlikely that Davidson's holistic approach will assist him greatly in understanding the term 'rú yǎ' which, I understand, poorly translates to English as "Confucianists' (or the intellectual people's) elegant manners."[55] The correct way to learn the exact connotations of a concept like "rú yǎ" is to acquire the pertinent cognitive map and thus "get into" that cultural framework or form of life. But, it must be emphasized, such an understanding is not a purely cognitive or mental event; it takes place essentially as a result of *actually acting* as an agent in that culture for a sufficiently long time, not via behaviorist methods which rely on a minimalist semantics and maximal holism. The essential problem of Davidson's account can also be appreciated this way: how can the assumption that a Chinese speaker is mostly right in her beliefs about the world and is a rational agent can help a field linguist who has wonderful observational skills to figure out the meaning of an utterance like "he displays 'rú yǎ' "?

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[54] Davidson 1990, p. 320, my emphases.

I have devoted the previous section to a discussion of the instructive case of the historical transition from behaviorism to cognitivism (or the information-processing approach) in experimental psychology because I strongly believe that if we are to assess the strengths and weaknesses of a theory of meaning and interpretation which has certain substantial affinities to the behavioristic methods or themes, we must be cognizant of the insurmountable problems of this particular trend in psychology. There are, in my opinion, interesting parallels we must notice between the theoretical advantages of a cognitive approach to our mental world and a scheme-based semantics in philosophy of language/meaning, the most striking of those being the immense *explanatory power* we gain as we allow ourselves to utilize certain hypothetical constructs—which are invariably scorned or mistrusted by those who favor a restrictive extensionalism and/or semantic minimalism. Let us also observe that the shift from behaviorism to cognitivism and the introduction of hypothetical entities to psychological inquiry did not give rise to "ghosts in the machine" in that field; it created a new style of reasoning about mental phenomena and opened up a vast area of research and understanding. The underlying reason why we need a scheme-based semantics instead of some sort of verificationism and quasi-behaviorism is essentially not different: we want to achieve a better understanding of the intensional aspects of our world and the nature of communication between different cultures and forms of life. We also want, coming back to one central subject matter of the present study, to be able to shed light on one of the most challenging matters of contemporary analytic philosophy, viz., the alleged robustness of *propositional truth*.

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[55] My thanks to Li Li for this brilliant example and our long conversations on cross-cultural matters.

CHAPTER SIX

Alethic Realism

6.1. Non-epistemic Truth

I have thus far defended MR_{MIN} and argued against TR, Quinean thingism, and Davidson's minimalist semantics. The main idea that underlies this peculiar semantic-ontological concoction is that although there is a well-structured, in-itself, mind-independent reality, such a reality cannot in the absence of the intentional elements of the world perform the miraculous task of organizing the objects to yield the "second-class" truthmakers. The makers or conditions of propositional truths are created jointly by language and mind-independent reality; and, consequently, there cannot be truths in a world which is not inhabited by cognitive agents imposing their frameworks or schemes upon that reality and forming a communal "conceptual web" of truthmakers. In this chapter, I will argue for a robust notion of propositional truth, rejecting the epistemic and coherentist accounts advertised by a considerable number of anti-realists today. As one can notice, this leaves me with a *prima facie* objectionable, if not outright incoherent, account: if (1) truths are generated within the conceptual boundaries of one or another scheme, (2) the intentional components of the truth-making relation cannot actually be sifted out, and (3) the Tractarian factualism is seriously flawed, then the natural alternative is to give up the idea that truth has anything to do with the objective aspects of world and maintain that the real source of propositional truths is either justificatory success of the agents or the totality of the existent coherential ties among doxastic items pertaining to a system. In either case, we get the result that there is nothing in the world to "make" the truths, and we reasonably abandon the correspondence theory of truth.

Although I reject any kind of correspondence between a linguistic entity and the mind-independent reality out there—as envisaged by the factualists like Wittgenstein and Armstrong—I tend to think that the idea of correspondence or fitting between a truthmaker and a truth-bearer is one that cannot be easily dispensed with. Specifically, I maintain that it is possible to hold on to AR provided that correspondence (or truth-making relation) is understood to take place between truth-bearers and parts or aspects of *a (conceptually) human-made world*. But if truth-making is understood in this (Goodmanian, Rortyan) fashion, I must, it might be argued, give up the title 'realism' altogether. Thus, our question: is it possible to salvage realism (or the objectivity of the truth-making relation) while taking correspondence as a relation between two human-made entities?

I believe that this is possible. My proposal is to borrow the strengths of realism and anti-realism while avoiding their weaknesses. I have already suggested that the truth-making relation is best understood as *some* sort of correspondence although both ends of such a relation should be rendered human-made or "homely." How close does this bring me to anti-AR? Much less than what one might expect. The critical point of departure is my objection to the epistemic or pragmatist notion of truth. Needless to say, the philosophical discomfort about defining the concept of propositional truth epistemically has been aptly articulated by a number of epistemologists, and I do not think that I can better their main arguments. A. Goldman, in his *Epistemology and Cognition* (1986) and *Knowledge in a Social World* (1999), offered a particularly cogent critique of anti-AR. I will appropriate some of his arguments for realism in the formulation of my own alethic account.

Goldman, like the other realistically inclined philosophers, claims that there is something very dubious about endorsing such pragmatist definitions or senses of truth as "warranted assertability" and "what you can defend against all comers" (proposed by R. Rorty) where the truth of a proposition is a function of the evidence in support of it, rather than being an independent thing.[1] Goldman presents an example intended to show that such a notion of truth is mistaken. In this example, a person is accused of a very serious crime. Numerous witnesses identify him as the perpetrator of this crime and he unfortunately has no alibis. Although he is totally innocent, he is unable to prove it. The real criminal, on the other hand, is dead now and, under these circumstances, the accused man cannot defend himself against all comers. If we adopt the sense of truth suggested by Rorty, it turns out that this person is guilty. Yet, what *really* happened was that he did not commit that crime. Consequently, Goldman argues,

> the only correct sense of 'true' makes truth independent of how well it can be defended. Its defensibility is a separate matter, which may depend on a variety of extraneous circumstances. Any innocent person accused of a crime surely wants the *real* truth to emerge; and the real truth is all that is normally meant by 'true'.[2]

I think Goldman's argument fully reflects the substance of AR. The essential idea here is that no matter how well we may agree on a certain matter, this is not sufficient to make a statement true; propositional truth is context- and verification-transcendent. According to Goldman, Putnam's internal realism is also an example of anti-AR in that it is based upon such epistemic considerations as justification under ideal (or sufficiently good) epistemic conditions. The common problem about the claims of the early Putnam and Dummett is that it is circular to characterize truth in terms of epistemic justification or verification because propositional truth is a basic concept by means of which we define justification and evidence. For instance,

> [o]ne has stronger evidence for [an empirical proposition like] p to the extent that the evidence makes p *more likely*. But 'more likely' must mean 'more likely to be true.'[3]

This kind of intuition is shared especially by those realists who advocate a reliabilist or truth-conducive account of epistemic justification. P. Kitcher argues that if justification is formulated in reliabilistic terms (e.g., in terms of those processes which have greater likelihood of generating true than false beliefs), it becomes impossible to get a clear understanding of the nonrealist conception of truth for it now "seems that *one* difficulty has given way to two."[4]

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[1] Goldman 1986, p. 18.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 18.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 147.

The principal difference between a realist like Goldman and the verificationists like Dummett is that the latter approach the issue about propositional truth from a standpoint that prioritizes human understanding and meaning. By contrast Goldman holds that

> in the case of many if not most physical object statements, their truth certainly appears to be possible independently of human verification. For example, it might be true that such-and-such happened in the Andromeda galaxy although no human beings were (or are) in a position to verify it. (To hold otherwise would involve an untenable form of *speciesism*.) Moreover this modal fact seems far more certain than any (interesting) doctrine in the theory of meaning.[5]

Although Goldman believes that a correspondence theory of truth has the promise of filling the realist bill, he has no intention to revive TR, the idea that our world is "prestructured into truthlike entities." The quasi-Kantian alternative Goldman instead has in mind can be spelled out by using the metaphor of "fitting." Accordingly, the truth-bearers resemble garments which do or do not fit the "body," viz., the world, and this means that the correspondence or fitting relation can be envisaged in a multiplicity of ways. To give an example, the reality itself does not dictate a choice between such footwear as sandals, slippers, and basketball shoes. But the in-itself reality is surely not a construction: a shoe cannot be worn as a hat. Now we can articulate the fundamental problem of anti-AR employing the fittingness metaphor: the defender of the epistemic theory of truth conflates the manufactured garments and the body. For a realist like Goldman, the truth conditions of our statements are to be found in the world; but our world is not a noumenal object in the sense of being independent of human conceptualization. To sum up, although the fitting between a certain part/aspect of the world and a truth-bearer is not decided epistemically, still the terms and conditions of such "correspondence" are laid down in a manner comprehensible to human cognizers. Therefore, we are never cut off from the world we try to understand.

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[4] Kitcher 1993a, p. 165.
[5] Goldman 1986, p. 151.

Without a doubt, Goldman's metaphor of fittingness is a significant improvement upon the customary correspondence truth. It is nonetheless a somewhat ambiguous one. The main source of difficulty is about the exact identity of the "body" in that analogy. Goldman explicitly says that what he calls "the world" is not an unconceptualized, noumenal entity.[6] But if the "body" is meant to denote the *conceptualized world*, it cannot be as "objective" or "garment-independent" as Goldman's analogy initially suggests. To put it differently, our (conceptualized) world is one which is *ex hypothesi* always already "dressed-up." This blurs, and detracts from the strength of, the body-garment contrast Goldman aims to depict in his discussion of the fittingness relation. Moreover, now it seems right, in a Putnamian spirit, to ask from *whose* point of view the world has been conceptualized. Goldman's analogy becomes confusing as a result of his failure to specify the *extent* and *nature* of garment-independence (e.g., objectivity, ontological robustness, etc.) that he wishes to attribute to that "body." His portrayal of the world as a single body which different garments could fit retains the MR_{MAX}-ist idea that the world, unlike those garments, has a unique form and determined ontological structure. But the metaphor loses its coherence and credibility once he pronounces that his focus of attention in this context is actually the phenomenal world rather than some in-itself, unconceptualized reality.

Viewed from a slightly different perspective, Goldman's predicament seems to spring from two conflicting tendencies. On the one hand, he wants to preserve the objectivity of the fitting relation by rendering the "object side" of it as nonconceptual as possible—hence, the notion of a single, objective body. On the other hand, he is aware of the fact that he cannot turn that body into a prestructured noumenal realm—for this would be to repeat the common mistake of the traditional correspondence theories. The philosophical upshot of this tension is that Goldman's fittingness metaphor is marred with some ontological ambiguity and a question about the explanatory potential of his analogy.

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[6] *Ibid.*, pp. 152-154.

I will address this important issue later in this chapter. Let us concentrate for the moment on one of the most central arguments Goldman provides in support of a realist conception of propositional truth. In *Knowledge in a Social World*, Goldman emphasizes that a theory of truth has two distinct tasks. First of all, it tries to explicate the *meaning* of truth. Second, the theory seeks an answer to the question of what constitutes a *test* or *criterion* for a proposition's being true.[7] The crucial realist claim in this context is that the two tasks are rather independent of one another. Goldman, like other prominent ARists such as Alston and Devitt, insists that how we recognize a truth-bearer's being true is not related to the question of the nature of propositional truth. According to Goldman's new proposal, truth becomes a success word and his alethic account a "descriptive success" theory. The measure of success for a truth-bearer is, as before, fitting or corresponding to a mind-independent reality. But Goldman doubts that the traditional realist's favorite truthmakers, viz., sentence-like facts, is a plausible candidate for such a task. There are various sorts of truths (e.g., negative truths) which apparently have no obvious truthmaker(s). So Goldman contends that "[a]s long as anything that makes a proposition true is part of reality—construed as broadly as possible—this fits the correspondence theory as formulated [by my account of descriptive success]."[8] Goldman thinks that propositional truth is supervenient on "reality-based truthmakers." This idea is different from what is conveyed by Armstrong's account of truthmakers in that the latter position "embeds" the makers of our propositional truths in (rather than *merely basing them upon*) the mind-independent reality.

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[7] Goldman 1999, p. 41.

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 62.

I think it is both possible and useful to have several major criteria for being an alethic realist—one being the meaning-test distinction described above. This kind of realism can also be expressed in terms of the truth conditions of our statements as opposed to the conditions of assertability for the speakers of particular languages. These different criteria seem to highlight different aspects of the same philosophical perspective and, thus, surely merit attention in our attempts to get an adequate picture of AR. One point to bear in mind is that the contemporary philosophers approach the alethic issues from various angles with different intentions: some center their arguments around the concepts of meaning, understanding, and communication, whereas a considerable number of others do not regard them to be decisive or essential in a theory of truth. Consequently, it may be beneficial to have a criterion which broadly encompasses and demarcates most of the "realist" and "anti-realist" accounts that, one way or another, tackle the philosophical issues about propositional truth. I will define here another criterion which, I believe, generally applies to the majority of the current perspectives:

> *The Discovery Criterion (DC) for AR*: A given philosophical perspective is a form of alethic realism if it endorses the idea that the truth or falsity of a truth-bearer is, generally speaking, a matter of discovery regardless of the ontological and epistemological commitments of that perspective. Accordingly, there may be a number of (true or false) propositions whose truth/falsity is not (or has not been, will not be, could not be, etc.) discovered by human cognizers.[9]

I believe that the Discovery Criterion is a sufficient condition for AR; but I am not imposing it as a necessary one. Now it seems that DC can correctly identify the theories of both the ARists (e.g., Goldman, the later Putnam, Alston, Devitt) and the anti-ARists

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[9] Alethic Realism is often regarded as a thesis which goes beyond what I am stating in the Discovery Criterion. Alston (1996, p. 5), for instance, contends that "at the heart of Alethic Realism" is the idea that a truth-bearer is true if and only if what it says to be the case actually is the case. My formulation differs from that customary conception in that there is no mention of "the world" in DC.

(e.g., Rorty, Allen), whose concern with AR or anti-AR lies chiefly within the boundaries of the highly disputed relation between propositional truth and epistemic justification or evidence. The more interesting cases are, of course, those accounts which approach the matter from the perspective of meaning, understanding, interpretation, communication, and so on. Hence, M. Dummett—who describes AR in terms of our (alleged) understanding of the verification-independent truth conditions and finds it unintelligible—can be considered a strong anti-ARist in light of the above-given criterion. And Davidson, to whom I have tentatively attributed *some* sort of anti-realism in Chapter Four, also appears now to be a member of the anti-AR camp in that he is rather unlikely to endorse the idea that there may be some true statements which will never emerge in, or be brought to, discourse and interpretation. Davidson does not agree, for example, with the claims of such linguistic Kantians as Putnam, Lynch, and Goldman for whom, given a language equipped with sufficiently rich syntactic and semantic resources, truth becomes independent of the individual epistemic and doxastic states and how they are communicated between human beings. Instead, Davidson makes truth a quasi-transcendental supposition for the linguistic task of the interpreter. Besides, as Hacking puts it, Davidson's whole theory seems "interpreter-sided," and this raises certain Wittgensteinean worries about the private nature of interpretation and translation:

> Davidson's present philosophy has something in common with solipsism. The solipsist thinks that a private language is not only possible, but the only one. Davidson is infinitely far away from that limit point, but he has only passed from one to two. We might call him a duetist. The possibility of error [nonetheless] implies that there have to be more than duets.[10]

Although Davidson exhibits certain realist tendencies when insists that *the world* is not a purely mental or communal creation and that a satisfactory theory of meaning and understanding can only be given in terms of the *truth* conditions of our statements, such conditions, for Davidson, are of philosophical interest only in the actual instances of some human agent's earnest attempts to interpret the speech, and grasp the meanings and beliefs, of another one. But this is hardly the idea the ARist has in mind when she talks about the "robustness" of our concept of truth. It is difficult to see how Davidson's theory can be made to conform to DC which allows in a straightforward way the possibility of propositional truths that may never be utilized by the actual human agents in an instance of interpretation or translation.

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[10] Hacking 1986, p. 458.

Given the initial plausibility of DC, let us dwell on the essential idea behind it. Consider the following set of propositions:

$P_0(t_{now})$: There are no humans living on Earth at t_{now};
$P_1(t_{now})$: There is only one human living on Earth at t_{now};
$P_2(t_{now})$: There are two humans living on Earth at t_{now};
.
.
.
$P_N(t_{now})$: There are N humans living on Earth at t_{now}.

Take N to be a sufficiently large number such as 10^{12}. Our intuitions strongly suggests that at any given time, only *one* of $P_0, \ldots, P_N$ is true and all the rest are false. Besides, we also feel that this is a matter of *discovery* and, in this sense, truth is certainly "out there." As one can imagine, it may not be humanly possible ever to verify the truth of that particular P_i which happens to be true at a given t_{now}. Now, if the verificationist theories of truth are correct, we *cannot* say: "P_i *is* true now though it remains beyond our epistemic powers." The ARist, by contrast, believes that one of those N+1 propositions is true independently of our evidential capabilities. Stated in a slightly different way, there is something highly implausible about the idea that the true proposition above, $P_i(t_{now})$, suddenly becomes, or gets elevated to the state of being, true the moment we verify it or (for the Davidsonian) whenever it is brought to the interpretative domain of ordinary discourse. A more reasonable assumption would, of course, be to say that $P_i(t_{now})$ is true no matter what we can accomplish epistemologically and linguistically.

6.2. Is Truth Independent of Us?

Now it is time to explain how I envisage a viable marriage of such a realist approach and the anti-realist notion of "fitting a human-made world." I maintain that even though the anti-ARist (more narrowly, the pragmatist) is justified in insisting that we cannot step outside our skins and compare ourselves with something beyond our cognitive reach (and also that it is *human beings* who make truths, just as they "make" good, justice, wealth, and so on), the anti-ARist is unable to give a convincing account of *what keeps individual truths from arbitrarily being anything at all.* We need some AR in this semantic-ontological picture. Let me elaborate this further.

Anti-ARists typically oppose AR by rejecting the independence of truth in a wholesale fashion. I am inclined to think that this is somewhat like throwing the baby out with the bath water. Many philosophers, I contend, fail to distinguish different senses of truth's dependence on cognitive agents. I will mention here two senses (probably there are more), calling them the *inherent* (or "general") sense and the *referential* (or "singular") sense.[11] In the first of these senses, which underlies the anti-ARist claim, truth is conceived as, for lack of a better term, a "medium" between cognizers and reality and, quite obviously, in this sense truth cannot be independent of human beings. As Putnam and Davidson maintain, in the absence of cognitive agents there can be no symbolic language, no proposition and, thus, no truths.[12] Being understood in this sense, it is implausible to suggest that truth is something independent of us. Yet, in the second of these senses, truth-making relations (and *truth values* of certain singular propositions) are clearly independent of the cognitive states of each particular individual. The two senses are not totally isolated from each other; they are two dimensions of one and the same notion. Strictly speaking, the inherent sense of dependence draws our attention to the fact that it is human beings who create language (or any representational system) by which truth can be sought, while the referential sense of dependence reminds us that language has an assertoric aspect which enables us to attempt to check out the contents of certain propositions for correctness.

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[11] Several realist philosophers have pointed out the kind of distinction I am drawing here. See, e.g., Putnam 1987, p.20; Lynch 1998, pp. 137-138; Goldman 1986, pp. 155-156; Goldman 1999, p. 20; Searle 1995, p. 166.

[12] For a relevant discussion, see Allen (1995, p. 178) and his endnote 4 (p. 221).

Consider the following an example. "Our planet revolves around the sun" is a proposition which could not have been invented and uttered a hundred million years ago. There was no such truth *in* that world whereas this proposition can now be articulated *for* that world as "Our planet was revolving around the sun a hundred million years ago"—be it true or false. From the standpoint of the inherent dependence, truths do not hang in the air, waiting patiently to be noticed by some agent and, therefore, are not independent. In the referential dependence sense, however, the truth value of the above proposition is of course independent of me, my neighbors and the scientists who are working on that matter. Propositional truth, being conceived this way, is *not* independent of *all* of us but it *is* independent of *each* of us. As a thought experiment, suppose that in the year 2040 everybody gets killed in World War 3. This terminates the production of truths due to dependence in the inherent sense. Still, the truth value of the proposition "Our planet will revolve around the sun during the year 2040," that we can assert long before such a catastrophe, has right now a truth value which is independent (in the referential sense) of each of us and, more interestingly, independently of the fact that this proposition is about a time when no humans exist. In other words, this proposition can legitimately be employed by a cognizer to refer to a piece of reality which has independent existence and, in virtue of keeping one foot on this independent realm, the pertinent truth is not dependent on any of us in the referential sense. In *Knowledge in a Social World*, Goldman claims that "if nobody had ever formed a belief in the double helical structure of DNA, it would still be true that DNA has a double helical structure."[13] Although this idea appeals to our realist intuitions, we must not lose sight of the fact that the "second-class" states of affairs cannot be understood in isolation from the conceptual resources and intensional aspects of our world. More fundamentally, such a fact about DNA may be non-existent and/or incomprehensible for agents whose cognitive capacities happen to be substantially different from ours.

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[13] Goldman 1999, p. 12.

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6.3. Situations and Frameworks

Let me attempt to base these intuitive thoughts on a theoretically firmer basis. To attain this goal, I will define several terms:

> A *Framework* is either a general or a domain-specific abstraction from a given constellation (or network) of linguistic and non-linguistic communal practices of a given group of human cognizers such that (1) those practices enable the cognizers or practitioners belonging to the network to form and employ various tokens of symbols that are about parts or aspects of their world and also to communicate with each other, and (2) the intended abstraction represents or reflects the *form(s)* and/or *style(s)* of reasoning, communication and deliberate action of the practitioners.

An instance of *framing*, performed by an agent belonging to a linguistic community, can be defined as a (non-conscious, non-voluntary) act of employing, and imposing upon the external reality, a particular Framework by that agent. I define the term '*Situation*' as a set of framed circumstances that can be conceived by the members of a linguistic community as occurrences in their world—that is, occurrences that may affect their verbal and non-verbal actions. The Frameworks in/through which actual Situations are identified have a broader scope than mere assertoric or descriptive contents in a language; they operate upon a whole range of semantic and cultural elements that make up our lives.

I prefer the concept of Situation to that of state of affairs since the latter has a long philosophical history of being associated narrowly with the notion of sentence-like ontological entities like facts or propositions. As I understand the term, there can be observational (or empirical), scientific, religious, poetical, and spiritual Situations. Consequently, our common notion of a fact or state of affairs is considerably more restricted in scope than what I call a Situation. In a nutshell, Situations are conceptually framed parts or aspects of *the phenomenal world*, and Frameworks are our ways of getting into cognitive contact and dealing with them.[14] One important reason to introduce these terms into our discussion is to be able to shed light upon a serious problem Davidson's quasi-behaviorism encounters and fails to handle properly, viz., how we come to understand another form of life or culture. My stance on this issue will, I hope, become clearer later. But my pithy answer to this question is that understanding across different forms of life is achieved if/when an agent acquires to a reasonable degree the necessary verbal and nonverbal skills to employ the Frameworks of "the other" (one notable result of which being successful action *and* proper cognitive orientation), and thus achieves some understanding and insight over the Situations of their world.

My alethic thesis is, then, twofold: first, each and every truthmaker, which is a "second-class" state of affairs, is (but reality itself is presumably *not*) relative to a particular Framework and that there can be no truthmakers not determined and fashioned by some Framework. Second, since the phenomenal truths are made as a result of some fitting between propositions and *such* truthmakers, each and every truth is relative to a particular Framework and that there can be no truths not determined and fashioned by some Framework. Take, for instance, the empirical statement "A total solar eclipse is to occur on Wednesday." We are able to characterize the Situation involved in this instance by using our world knowledge and conceptual tools, and we are also able to form and express this statement because we employ a natural language which provides us with a Framework enabling us to frame a certain part of reality as the phenomenon of eclipse. Suppose for a moment that intelligent creatures like ourselves never existed in the universe. Would it be *true in such a universe* that "an eclipse" occurred? It seems quite clear to me that this is not plausible—in spite of the fact that the underlying physical basis of that world (i.e., objects, their *noumenal* properties, and the *noumenal* external relations) would, I suppose, be mostly identical to what we have now. Of course, we are understandably tempted to say that any such phenomenon in any universe *would* be "an eclipse." Nevertheless, from a broader (perhaps Quinean) epistemo-ontological perspective, it seems always possible for different cognizers, at least in principle, to frame a particular part or aspect of reality in different ways. Contrary to the Tractarian view, we apparently do not have good reasons to suppose that there is a single "true framing."

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[14] In other words, Situations are neither representations nor objects. Let us observe here that my exposure of the notions of Framework and Situation may give rise to questions about priority (probably in the form of some chicken-egg conundrum). But there is no puzzle here. From the ontological perspective, Situations are what constitute our world. From the semantic-epistemic point of view, Frameworks are what we use to understand, and get knowledge about, the world. Since these notions are *abstractions* from the actual cognizers' actual linguistic and non-linguistic practices, there is no question of priority in this picture.

Frameworks provide us with "interpretative contexts" by which we can make sense of reality and the Situations situated in it. They also enable us to convey our intentions and beliefs to each other. Most importantly (at least for the purposes of this study), Frameworks provide us with schemes of concepts which, as I have suggested in the previous chapters, are of vital role and significance in understanding propositional truths and truthmakers. All our truths are dependent upon Frameworks in the inherent sense; and the related truthmakers can only be found in the phenomenal Situations. Yet, within a given Framework, the truth-bearers get their truth values independently (in the referential sense) of the agents sharing that Framework. There are two critical semantic-ontological questions here. First, how are different Frameworks employed by different linguistic communities related to each other? Second, what is the relation between a Framework and the mind-independent reality? The answers to these questions are decidedly Kantian. The agents whose cognitive structure is essentially the same (e.g., due to belonging to the same species) cannot in general have radically different representations of the external reality. Moreover, from a naturalist point of view, the cognitive agents and the mind-independent reality in which they find themselves *cannot* fail to inform or affect one another. By the same token, despite the fact that the empirical facts are actually "our" facts, they *cannot* fail to be in touch with the noumenal reality. An actual state of affairs like snow's being white is a joint product of the external reality, human cognition, and the linguistic tools of human agents. This is the principal reason why our "facts" are neither in the mind nor in the external reality; they are neither mental creations nor autonomous, objective entities. Therefore, both Armstrong's TR (or materialism) and idealism are mistaken theses. The correct response to the question of where the phenomenal truthmakers are located is that they really do not "reside" anywhere determinate (such as nature or human mind). As Putnam would say, the linguistic and conceptual resources of agents and the external reality together give philosophical birth to Situations and, hence, more narrowly, to truthmakers.

Like other contemporary linguistic Kantians, I find the Davidsonian portrayal of such semantic constructs as conceptual schemes seriously misleading. As I have explained in the previous chapter, our schemes of concepts can be understood in a Wittgensteinean fashion, as exhibiting certain resemblances and differences between one another. The same can be stated about Situations and Frameworks. An act of framing where, say, an agent carefully observes the clouds and tries to forecast the weather, cannot be vastly different across different cultures. And the way I frame the phenomenon of rain must have great similarities with that of the ancients. Just like we cannot be cut off from the mind-independent reality, we are never in our conceptual "islands" vis-à-vis various ways of framing that reality and representing the phenomenal Situations to ourselves.

According to AR, truth is a robust and "objective" notion. One way of making this point is to assert that claims about propositional truths support *counterfactuals*. Suppose, as a follow-up to my WW3 example above, an extra-terrestrial visits our planet after 2040 and finds no humans on the planet but only vast amount of audiovisual information stored in a variety of ways. If that being is sufficiently intelligent, it can, in principle, master several languages and understand some of the sentences uttered by human agents. It can also be stated, in light of my alethic criterion (DC), that what such an extra-terrestrial must do is basically to try to discover truths about humans. It is in this sense, I argue, that the truth values of most of our statements is determined "objectively." Of course, not *all* of our statements are rendered objectively true *in this fashion*. It is a fact that a posteriori statements exhibit an amazing range of variety and diversity across the epistemo-semantic spectrum. Employing Dummett's example, "Smith is brave" is a statement, which, despite being one whose truth value is yet to be "discovered," needs a great amount of interpretation and, in this sense, it is not like a more straightforward empirical instance like "There are six apples in this basket." In both cases, however, the statement is made true by a world of Situations which is generated out of a collaboration of the external reality and the Frameworks we impose on it. Thus, a strong sympathy or similar positive thoughts that I feel towards Smith cannot *make* him a brave person if he is not so in the actuality. (Of course, I can lead people around to think that he is brave; but, again, this would not be sufficient to make him so.) What makes this example different from the one about apples is that in the latter there is not much room for rational disagreement. Yet, even in those cases where the verdict on the situation seems hardly uncontroversial, it remains true that the individual claims are checked against the Situations of a world whose conceptual or semantic structure is more or less stable. If the above-mentioned extra-terrestrial visiting this planet could educate himself with an aim to become competent in English in order to examine the relevant documents about Smith, then (assuming the reliability of those records), it could adjudicate on Smith's being brave or not.

Our judgments tend in general to display less unanimity as we move from the empirical matters to evaluative or normative ones and, using the Searlean terminology, from the "brute facts" to "institutional facts." Even though it is (chiefly) "the world" which determines the truth-values of both "There are six apples in this basket" and "This painting is awful," these statements are not made true or false in exactly the same way.[15]

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[15] See Johnson 1992, p. 10 for a similar claim.

I contend that this is the main reason why it is indeed a daunting task even to start to spell out a systematic and general account of how our statements are actually made true or false by the world. Nevertheless, I do not think that such attempts are futile or absurd. On the contrary, the whole enterprise can be quite useful and enlightening so long as the theoretician bears in mind that the "frictionless surfaces" exist, so to speak, in our minds, not on the "rough ground." The truth-values of most of our empirical statements—though certainly not all—exhibit an impressive robustness and stability with respect to our changing mental states and personal preferences. I am one of those who think that such stability which is captured (following the lead of the later Wittgenstein) in our language and social practices, is a legitimate object of scrutiny for philosophers. I am also inclined to believe, recalling one of the main conclusions of Chapter Three, that this stability and structuredness must at least partly come from the in-itself objects and properties—if we are to avoid the unreasonable alternatives like having an unstructured or chaotic reality *and* a remarkably stable and organized set of mental states.

One possible way for the linguistic Kantian to deal with the ethical and esthetical facts and truths is to say that they too have their truthmakers in the form of appropriate states of affairs.[16] A more promising approach, I believe, is to say that the normative or evaluative statements find their truthmakers within Situations comprehensible to the members of a given cultural-linguistic community. The reason for this strategy is that in my opinion we have better understanding of an indeterminate or vague situation than an indeterminate (e.g., "soft") fact or states of affairs. Take a statement like p: "*Las Meninas* is the best work of Diego Velázquez" where the truth conditions of p are eminently contextual.[17] It is fairly evident that the satisfaction of those conditions heavily depends on the evaluative perspective of the agent and the criteria he employs in the relevant adjudication. This means that we can expect greater disagreement among cognizers regarding what should count as the decisive factor(s) to be taken into account in the determination of p's truth value in comparison to the presumed factor(s) involved in the case of a proposition like "There are six apples in this basket." Even when two cognizers, S_1 and S_2, share the same conceptual Framework with respect to p (viz., that by which an artwork like *Las Meninas* can be appreciated and evaluated), the probability of a reasonable conflict between S_1 and S_2 about the *truth value* of p is presumably not negligible.

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[16] As Lynch (1998, p. 134) remarks, there is perhaps a "softness" in the esthetic facts which is absent in the above-given apple example.

[17] This parallels R. G. Collingwood's famous example of a car accident where the cause of the accident is given in a variety of ways depending on the professional background and interests of the commentator.

"Subjective complications" are not the only sort of difficulty in dealing with the truth conditions or truth-makers of the aberrant cases. Another source of difficulty is about *extensional vagueness* or *indeterminacy*. Take the statement q: "The number of hills on the surface of Earth is *a*." Suppose that our aim is to find out the "real" value of *a* so that q becomes a true statement. But achieving exactitude in this instance is a practically impossible task because, given the qualitative and imprecise content of the definitions we have for such terrain features as mountains, hills, and heights, we are inevitably to have certain vague or borderline cases, making the determination of the truth value of q extremely problematic. Therefore, the truth conditions of our empirical statements can in certain circumstances be indeterminate, vague, or disputable due to extensional and/or intensional reasons.

Still, *given such factors and considerations*, empirical propositions typically acquire their truth value by virtue of happenings or Situations in a framed world which is not created at will by human agents. There are cases (e.g., evaluative statements like p) where non-extensional elements that enter into the truth-making relation blur the intersubjective robustness or objectivity of the Situation and cause the evaluative/normative factors have the final say on the truth values of a proposition under consideration. And there are other cases (e.g., vague Situations like the one described by q) where the truth conditions themselves are indeterminate. But even in those cases, the truthmaker(s) are, or must be, found ultimately in the same semantic-ontological "realm" with those of "snow is white"—because it is the only realm open to human cognition. Even for propositions like p and q, human agents ordinarily "check" the circumstances in the (framed) world, not each others' beliefs and opinions, in order to ascertain the relevant "truth conditions." This does *not* mean that the truth-making relation has a single nature uniformly exemplified in all instances of propositional truth. If the account developed here is right, it looks like a more promising approach to embrace pluralism regarding the semantic character of truthmakers and truth-making.

There is another, perhaps a more fundamental, reason why it is a mistake to insist on an alethic picture in which there exist one-to-one relations between truthmakers (states of affairs) and our propositional truths in general. To see this, consider the following: what is the truthmaker of a statement like "There are no chairs in this room"? It is doubtful that we will come across a neatly individuated state of affairs which will make such a negative existential statement true—assuming that we do not want Russell's negative facts. I think that a significant advantage of employing Situations rather than states of affairs as truthmakers in the explanation of the fitting relation is that the concept of Situations provides us with a more general, encompassing, and powerful tool in dealing with such aberrant cases. I also believe that Armstrong has a point there when he asserts that the actual states of affairs are sufficient to "make" the negative and modal truths. With a linguistic Kantian makeover on Armstrong, we can reasonably maintain that the actual Situations in that room are all we need to get the other kinds of truths. In this way, not only do we salvage the (traditional) realist notion of objective truth-making, but we also give it a much needed "human face."

6.4. Coherence versus Correspondence

The account I am putting forward may appear to be a kind of coherence theory of truth. This is because I insist that truths are generated only within linguistic Frameworks and never outside of them. I will, nevertheless, argue that my theory is, in a peculiar way, more akin to the correspondence (or fitting) notion of truth. This is because of my conviction that coherence does not (and cannot) make a particular empirical statement true. As the following example suggests coherence is neither necessary nor sufficient for a statement's being true: Suppose an astronomer discovers in 2025 a rather distant galaxy (call it 'G') and, despite lack of any further relevant finding or evidence, makes the bold empirical assertion p: "There are carbon-based intelligent life forms in G"—we may suppose that she happens to get an inexplicable but very strong feeling about it. Now, we do not seem to get any incoherence when either p or not-p is added to the scientist's (or her community's) belief system in the year 2025. Some ten years later, due to the work of a number of scientists, a great degree of coherence gets established between the current scientific (including simple observational) background-knowledge and p. The findings convincingly suggest that there has been intelligent life in G for thousands of years. In such a case our natural or commonsensical reaction would be to think that p is true not only in 2035 but also in 2025. It is extremely implausible to think that p is made true only when a sufficient amount of coherence has been formed between the current scientific knowledge and that particular proposition p. Therefore, I contend that the truth value of an ordinary empirical statement normally has little to do with its coherence with the rest of our belief system. Notice that it is *not* among the implications of this thesis that empirical statements like "Pluto is the ninth planet from the sun in the solar system", "The Empire State Building is taller than the Eiffel Tower", "The universe is constantly expanding in all directions", and "Thales's sickness is caused by a virus"—assuming that Thales of Miletus once really got sick when he was a kid because of what we now call a virus and that this statement had been made by a somebody observing Thales—would have been true had they been uttered by a Greek nearly 2600 years ago. Not only that there were no such truths back then in that community but, more fundamentally, the respective linguistic Frameworks in which both the states of affairs and truths get formed were nonexistent that time. (This is contrasted with the states of affairs and truths associated with statements like q: "Most of the diseases we know are actually caused by living things which are too small to be seen with human eye" which probably *could have*, but had presumably not, *been* formed back then—since the Ancient Greeks' linguistic/scientific Frameworks possibly *could* engender and support the states of affairs and truths related to statements like q.)

From a broad perspective, there seems to be nothing objectionable about being a linguistic Kantian—and hence employing certain schemes or Frameworks in theorization—and defending some kind of a fitting relation between our statements and an objective world. As Schmitt has convincingly shown, Immanuel Kant himself, contrary to the supposition of many philosophers, was arguably a correspondence theorist.[18] In other words, it is not an incoherent position to juxtapose some kind of alethic realism and, say, an idealist ontology. The point to be emphasized here is that, given a certain Framework, the truth value of most empirical statements which can be formulated and articulated in that Framework is an object of discovery and as such it has nothing to do with evidence, justification, community agreement, individuals' mental states, coherence with belief systems, and so on.[19] We must be careful, I think, not to confuse the distinct ideas conveyed by *meaning coherentism* and *truth coherentism*.[20] The meaning of any empirical statement is generated within and by virtue of a linguistic system. Truth of a statement, on the other hand, is a matter of its veridically describing the relevant Situation which is constructed in reality and recognized within a linguistic/cultural Framework. Understood this way, since the meaning of a particular statement arises out of its place in a system of discourse and action, there cannot be meanings outside discursive systems. By contrast, we normally think that there are truths (or, rather, truth values) which we do not know yet and which we may fail to discover forever.

Another significant reason why my account is not coherentist lies in the fact that what I call a Framework does not merely relate to our linguistic/conceptual world or reality. Frameworks are, broadly speaking, about publicly shared forms of the existent "know-how"s and "know-that"s which render successful action and communication possible. What distinguishes Frameworks from other semantic abstractions like conceptual schemes is that the former notion encompasses the "actual territory" that interests epistemologists, philosophers of language, and action theorists in as broadly a manner as possible, accounting for the larger part of our conceptual life in a linguistic community (including the alethic aspect of our interaction with the world). Furthermore, I tend to regard the realist intuitions and the account of Frameworks given here as requiring some sort of fitting between symbols and Situations or, narrowly, states of affairs of the world, rather than coherence among propositions. Truths are not generated simply by a network of statements but by a collaboration of the world we live in and the symbolic systems we employ.

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[18] Schmitt 1995, p. 146. See also Alcoff 1996, p. 62.

[19] As I have mentioned earlier, I do not regard AR the way it is portrayed by epistemologists like Alston according to whom the makers of propositional truths *are* found in the mind-independent reality. Consequently, I can without falling prey to incoherence defend (my version of) AR since I am locating the truth conditions of our propositions within the existing conceptual schemes rather than in reality.

[20] See Alcoff 1996, p. 5.

6.5. Concluding Remarks

I once heard the following analogy from Martin Tweedale: truth is the answer nature/reality gives us when we put questions to it. Let me briefly offer variations on this catchy theme.

From the (linguistic) Kantian perspective, a Situation, rather than truth, is the answer reality gives us in response to a yes/no question we do or may pose. Consider an astronomic Framework which comprises such conceptual "tools" as 'number' and 'planetary system.' An agent employing that Framework would, then, be able to comprehend a Situation (or state of affairs) like there being three planets in a planetary system Y pertaining to a distant galaxy G. Reality *already has an answer* to a question like "how many planets are there in Y?" even before it was asked by an agent, *given* the conceptual or linguistic repertoire of the Framework within which we imagine asking that question. In this sense, what we need to do is to articulate the question, and find out the "answer" generously given by the framed reality in the form of a Situation—not truth. A Situation exists, we say, only in the presence of a linguistic or conceptual system. This is not to say that there would be no reality or "answerer" in the absence of concepts and language. It solely means that it would be silent—because no questions have been asked. Reality is a potential metaphysical answerer. And its answers come in the form of Situations. Therefore, the realist is right when she contends that there would still be planets in the absence of cognizers. That is, there would still be something out there which would "give rise" to certain facts or Situations about what we call a "planetary system," but only *for those beings* whose cognitive or linguistic resources could enable them to frame reality (and comprehend those Situations) as such. So reality does not, by itself, generate truths. Propositional truth is a *property* that some truth-bearers have and some do not; and that is the property of successfully (i.e., correctly) reflecting reality's answer to a potential question that is, or can be, asked within a Framework. Armstrong's theory is, then, doubly mistaken: he thinks that both the phenomenal states of affairs and the supervenient truths are in reality—or that the answers are given in reality's own language, not ours, and we do understand that noumenal language. Putnam believes that there are answers and nonepistemic truths, but no answerer. Finally, for Davidson and the pragmatists, our (alethic) success lies not in veridically obtaining the answers of the answerer, but in agreeing among ourselves that we (i.e., those who speak) somehow possess most of the answers already.[21]

According to the sort of realism I am advocating, reality, which presumably exists independently of our mental states and theories, is not capable of producing any truth by itself. Yet, cognitive agents, via interaction with that objective realm, produce social/linguistic Frameworks which enable them to "frame" its parts/aspects in certain ways. It is only by way of such Frameworks that we can talk about Situations (or states of affairs) and truths. I insist *both* on the objectivity *and* the "human-madeness" of truth. According to my interpretation of AR, both the received view (which interprets truth as a correspondence between truth-bearers and Tractarian facts) and pragmatism (which often fails to distinguish between truth and warranted assertability) are flawed. One underlying principle of AR is that our cognitive access to propositional truth involves *discovery*. I maintain that once a particular Framework gets established, individual truth-bearers are generally made true or false independently of the mental states of the cognitive agents involved in that Framework. The truth of the sentence token "A total solar eclipse is to occur on Wednesday" is human-dependent in one sense because "an eclipse" or "Wednesday" is *our conception*. However, once we agree that the meanings of these terms are not ambiguous, the truth value of the statement is not something we can play with for pragmatic reasons (such as our preferring to observe it on Sunday). In case we fail to distinguish between the two senses explicated above, the following should be a telling question: If there is no sense in which truth is independent of cognizers, why can't we make it anything we like?

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[21] This may indeed be the case; but what does it explain about propositional truth after all?

CHAPTER SEVEN

Epistemic Realism

7.1. Can Truth Be a Condition of Propositional Knowledge?

The truth condition (TC for short hereafter) of the classical tripartite definition of propositional knowledge has obviously not been as controversial as its justificatory component. One good reason behind this fact is that while the justificatory element of knowledge has always been felt by philosophers to be rather vague (Plato being the first one to admit this in *Theaetetus,* 201d), it has seemed to be "natural" to assume that we can only know what is really the case. As our common sense would suggest, it makes little or no sense to claim that one can *know* a sentence like "Earth is flat"; we deny without hesitation the possibility of knowledge in such a case on the basis of the "fact" that such a statement does not accord with reality. Hence in many books written by epistemologists one comes across a few statements about the truistic character of TC, followed by several chapters discussing how epistemic justification is to be understood. In other words, analytic philosophers have exhibited a remarkable consensus in reckoning TC as indispensable, if not sacrosanct. In this chapter, I will try to show that TC may not be as innocent as it first seems. More specifically, I will question its function vis-à-vis an *ordinary* (as opposed to an epistemically super-human) cognizer's *actual* doxastic practice and epistemic limits.

It is worth emphasizing that the realist conceives of propositional truth as a nonepistemic notion, i.e., as described by AR. In order to fully grasp the epistemological implications of this idea we must remind ourselves that the favorite point of view of AR is "a God's Eye point of view."[1] Propositional truth is something ideal; it is what an omniscient cognizer would immediately know if she beheld what made a proposition true—without having recourse to evidence or epistemic justification. And this fact remains the same as we shift our attention from the classical conception of correspondence to, say, a linguistic Kantian perspective according to which propositions are made true only relative to particular Frameworks human beings create. There is always a logical gap between the concept of evidence and that of truth unless we embrace anti-AR which I have criticized in the previous chapter.[2] A non-omniscient cognitive agent, however, can hardly possess the epistemic power or capability to close such a gap, to know that further evidence will not alter the truth-value assigned to a proposition. The truth conditions of our propositions may, and presumably often do, coincide with those conditions under which we deem it proper to assert them. Still, there is a logical gulf for the alethic realist between the two—a gulf dictated by our characterization of these two kinds of conditions.

Consider now this question: If *p* is an ordinary true proposition to be known by *S* who is a human cognizer, shall we require that there be at least one cognitive agent in the universe who can verify or ascertain conclusively that *p* is true? If the answer is "No," we answer the question at the cost of bringing about an undue externalization of plain human knowledge. In such a case, we would naturally think that the alleged knowledge of *p* is somewhat suspicious. That is to say, even though a lucky cognizer may hit on some true proposition *p* with some good justification (i.e., all three conditions hold simultaneously at a certain time), still, if *nobody* can in principle have a *conscious* cognitive access to the fact that TC really holds, then *p*'s being true in reality is a fairly mysterious event for human beings. It seems a bit counter-intuitive, if not irrational, to claim that realization of knowledge can be conditional on something whose occurrence in reality is *not epistemically accessible* to any cognitive being at all. One then wonders what the point of suggesting such a condition could be. So we ought to reject the idea that something can be among the conditions of empirical knowledge in spite of the fact that it theoretically remains beyond the epistemological reach of everybody (including scientists, clairvoyants, the extra-terrestrials NASA is hiding from us, and God).

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[1] Putnam used this term in 1981, p. 49. In this context, it basically refers to the epistemic position of a hypothetical omniscient cognizer (in contrast to normal humans) who can "see" the truth value of any truth bearer directly.

[2] This "gap" is one of the essential features of realism. Goldman (1986, p. 17), for example, maintains that we must distinguish between (i) what makes a proposition have a certain truth value (nature of truth), and (ii) how people can determine its truth-value (evidence for a proposition's truth value).

This brings us to the other alternative; that is, to require that the truth of *p* be somehow checked or verified if the tripartite definition is to be adopted. However, this gives rise to another question. *Who* is to check out that in an epistemic attempt of *S* to know that *p*, TC is really satisfied? It seems that it must be either *S* himself or some other cognizer. The former must be rejected because in order for *S* to be able to check out successfully that TC is satisfied in reality, *S* must do epistemologically far more than merely "hitting on" that truth: most crucially, he must somehow go beyond ordinary epistemic means such as appropriate justification, intersubjective agreement, etc., and obtain the meta-level information that TC *is* satisfied in reality no matter what the relevant propositional defeaters actually available to *S* are.[3] However, in the empirical world we unfortunately never receive such a marvelous present, a divine guarantee that the truth values we attribute to empirical propositions will not chance in the face of future developments. Hence, given that *S* is a non-omniscient cognizer with limited epistemic capacities and that propositional truth is conceived nonepistemically, *S* can never find himself in such an epistemologically privileged position as to be able to check the truth of *p*.

The second alternative is that another cognitive agent, say *R*, is to check out whether or not TC holds. *R* may be another (highly reliable) human cognizer, a perfect scientific community, or even an omniscient god. The epistemic quality of *R*, however, is irrelevant in this context because even the result of *R*'s conclusive verification, assuming for a moment that this is possible, would be available to *S* only *indirectly* (i.e., via proxies). That is, *S* can make use of the verification of *R* solely within the interest areas of the remaining two conditions, namely those of belief and justification. The reason for this is that what *R* achieves epistemologically turns out to be nothing but *evidence* for *S*; it is related to the domain of epistemic justification and assertability, and when viewed from the epistemological perspective of *S*—and holding on to the realist notion of propositional truth—this alternative has nothing to do with TC.

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[3] I will talk more about propositional defeaters in Chapter Nine.

It is, of course, true that we often ascribe doxastic or epistemic states to *other non-omniscient cognizers*. Suppose *S* strongly believes that a particular scientist (or a certain community of scientists), *R*, is well justified in his/its claims about our solar system—let *p* be the set of all such claims. Moreover, *if R* does know that *p*, then *S* can also be said to have an (externalistically) justified true belief about *p*. But let us now view the epistemic picture from the perspective of *R*. So far as *R* is not omniscient, the predicament of realistically knowing that *p* will recur, this time for *R*. *R*, in his turn, can claim knowledge either by fiat or by appealing to the alleged knowledge of another cognizer. That is, given the fact that *R* is not omniscient either, he must either beg the question or take part in an epistemic regress. It is, therefore, conspicuous that with regard to the alleged veridicality of *S*'s knowledge, *S* cannot check out, by *finite* means, the satisfaction of the truth conditions of an empirical proposition like *p*.

One may feel that I am imposing on our ordinary conception of propositional knowledge an arbitrary requirement—hence giving the impression that I am conflating empirical knowledge with Cartesian certainty or suggesting that the former requires the latter.[4] This would be a rather untenable position; in fact, most contemporary epistemologists would maintain that such a requirement is not part of the ordinary concept of knowledge and, hence, should be dropped as a requirement in explicating the concept of knowledge. What I am arguing here, however, has no such implications. I will make three points in the present context to elucidate why I am carrying out a different sort of epistemological project. First of all, I am not arbitrarily imposing conditions on ER. As will be clear in the next chapter, the problem of a lack of epistemic access carries over to higher level knowledge. The point there is that there is no superior epistemic position in which the (logical) gap between truth and evidence gets closed down or reduced in actual instances of empirical knowledge whereas the function or purpose of metaknowledge is to give epistemic access to the satisfaction of the conditions of knowledge, including for the realist the ARist truth condition. My argument hinges on the observation that Epistemic Realism suffers theoretically because it is incapable to provide an adequate account of metaknowledge and, thus, fails to be an adequate overall theory of knowledge. Secondly, it is not a telling objection to my position to say that what is actually needed is just objective probability of truth in connection with our justified beliefs. This is because even in those cases where an agent's belief in a true proposition is made highly probable due to proper epistemic justification and so on, the objective probabilities which putatively serve as a reliable indicator of the truth of such a proposition are still to play an epistemic role strictly *external* to the doxastic system of the agent. So it will not do in this context to point out that ordinary agents ordinarily do rely on epistemic justification which comes with objective probabilities—for the problem of access will recur in that case too. Thirdly, my anti-ERist argument neither entails nor involves a requirement regarding certainty. The problem I am concerned with is whether there is any noncircular access to the satisfaction of TC, individually or collectively, and thus it does *not* depend on assuming that an individual knower must be *certain* of the satisfaction of the truth condition.

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[4] I am thankful to Robert Almeder, Bruce Hunter, Bernard Linsky, and Alexander Rueger for their comments and criticisms on this matter.

There is another issue, and a possible worry, related to the position I am advocating. We have seen both that the tripartite definition of empirical knowledge contains a nonepistemic condition, and that ordinary human cognizers do not (and cannot) possess supernatural epistemic means other than various sorts of evidential support.[5] Then, an anti-ERist can raise the following question: what is the *actual* function or use of the truth condition? At first blush the answer seems to be "There isn't any." As I have argued above, we, actual human cognizers, are unable to come into conscious epistemic contact with propositional truths.[6] Even if (most of) our statements are either true or false in reality, we cannot, as I will clarify in the next chapter, "know" realistically in our epistemic attempts that TC is *really* being satisfied. But then what extra benefit do we get by retaining a condition like TC which cannot be checked out by any human cognizer?

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[5] Here I am not assuming that all instances of evidential support are of equal strength. I will broaden this issue later in this chapter.

This anti-ERist point can be countered by a realist as follows: The analysis given above misses the fact that TC in the tripartite definition is not meant to be an *operational condition*.[7] An epistemic subject is expected to believe that *p* and have adequate justification for *p*; but she is *not* required to have any direct epistemic access to the fact that the truth conditions for *p* are satisfied in reality. Of course, there is arguably no certainty regarding empirical truths. But not being able to attain certainty does not imply not being able to know empirical truths. The tripartite definition, we must remember, does not require—though it apparently does not exclude—*knowing* that the nonepistemic truth conditions of our beliefs are really being satisfied in our epistemic attempts.

This objection, however, is ironically a very eloquent statement of the epistemological problem I have been trying to highlight. The underlying idea behind the above-given objection is that such a cognitive agent can be held exempt from checking out TC without much ado because *this task* need not be fulfilled by her. This is not to say that the subject is not required to attempt such checking in an operational way; rather, it means that she is exempt from checking it out in a way that is *independent* of having a justified belief that *p*, despite the fact that the truth condition is independent of the justificatory condition. But this attitude neglects the sad fact that the problem here is not simply exempting one such cognizer from knowing fully what is going on with TC; rather, it concerns human cognizers' collective inability to perform such an extraordinary task.

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[6] Though, presumably, we often do experience the satisfaction of the truth conditions of our statements. My contention is that there is a difference between experiencing the satisfaction of the truth conditions and being in an epistemic position as to know that such a "veridical" experience is actually taking place.

[7] A non-operational condition is one which supposedly plays no actual part in the cognitive or epistemic practice of an ordinary agent. Needless to say, according to those who have little or no penchant for non-operational—or external(ized)—conditions, nothing about our cognitive or epistemic practice gets explained by reference to a notion like (nonepistemic) truth.

In conclusion, the problem I have posed seems like a genuine one for the realist (or externalist) since he ought, but is unable, to find at least one unexternalized non-omniscient epistemic agent.[8] If this is the case, TC (where truth is understood AR-ly) may have no actual epistemological import.[9]

7.2. McDowell and Close Encounters of the Veridical Kind

Epistemologists discuss the problem of human agents' veridical cognitive access to the nonepistemic truth conditions of their statements in various contexts. One notable contemporary example of this takes the form of appropriating the later Wittgenstein's notion of "criteria" and investigating how it can assist us in dealing with the skeptical worries about other minds. J. McDowell and C. Wright have offered valuable insight over this matter, and I will try to bring the gist of their ideas into discussion, somewhat dissociating them from their original context and placing into a broader perspective regarding ER.

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[8] As one can easily see, the issues concerning epistemic justification, especially the internalism-externalism debate, are clearly relevant to my discussion here. To mention one, many forms of reliabilism define justification conferring processes and procedures in terms of *truth conduciveness*, and one may wonder if my alethic-epistemic account has certain bearings on the characterization of such a concept. Besides, it must have been clear by now that I am defending some sort of "internalism" with regard to the debate over epistemic realism. A natural question to ask would be if/how my epistemic internalism relates to internalism about justification. I must nevertheless leave the justificatory matters out for the purposes of the present study.

[9] In my (1999a) I defended a very strong version of anti-ER. Now I think that the earlier version of my account failed to do justice to certain naturalist and pragmatic considerations as well as to the fact that our empirical beliefs exhibit an amazing variety in terms of their vulnerability to skeptical challenges. My current perspective, which I will present in the remainder of this chapter, bears the influence of Davidson's pragmatic approach—and also the relentless (and highly appreciated) opposition I have received on this issue from Bruce Hunter.

In Wittgenstein's original employment of the term, criteria constitute some kind of non-inductively established evidence for an agent *S* in such a way that the evidential support thus provided in favor of a statement *S* believes may be defeated later in light of new findings.[10] As Wright notes, the orthodoxy in the business of interpreting Wittgenstein attributes the idea that *S'*s recognition of satisfaction of criteria for a proposition *p* can confer "skeptic-proof knowledge that *p*"—at least regarding others' mental states. This seems to conflict, Wright thinks, with the most essential idea of Wittgenstein's conception of criteria, viz.,

> that to know the satisfaction of criteria for p is always consistent with having, or discovering, further information whose effect is that the claim that p is not justified at all.[11]

For the purposes of the present study, I will set aside the specific question of our knowledge of the other human agent's mental states, and project the present discussion onto a general context of the problem of epistemic access. In Section *7.2*, I have essentially claimed that our common cognitive access to the realist truth conditions of our ordinary statements seems to be mediated via proxies or epistemic interfaces like evidence and that this has the unexpected upshot that *knowledge* of satisfaction of the ARist truth condition of the tripartite definition of *knowledge* is—as the repetition of the term implies—not a mental state that non-omniscient human cognizers can easily claim without falling prey to circular reasoning. One may nonetheless wonder if this unsettling situation is really what we have to live by epistemologically. To explore the epistemological possibilities there, it may be useful to take a look at McDowell's response to the criterial position characterized above. A theorist of criterial support can claim, as Chisholm did in his *Theory of Knowledge*, that the propositions made evident by criterial evidence are *indirectly* evident to epistemic agents. Chisholm thought that we see right through the appearances to the things themselves *and* that our perceptual intake from the external reality constitutes criterial evidence in a non-inferential way.[12] This view can be contrasted with the account McDowell defended in his "Criteria, Defeasibility, and Knowledge." To reiterate, the criterial position holds that since the warrant S has in favor of a given proposition p is a defeasible one, our knowledge ascriptions are always compatible with the possibility that p may turn out to be false.[13] Furthermore, there is no conceivable way, according to this position, for us to distinguish the cognitive (or epistemic) achievement of a human agent for whom certain criteria for p are satisfied from that of another who experiences the satisfaction of truth conditions of p. But, McDowell asks, why should that be a reason for us to conclude that the two cognitive achievements really *are* the same?[14] He maintains that in certain cases we may actually be able to confront *directly* whatever satisfies the truth conditions of p without the envisaged interface. More clearly, we may, in the veridical cases, be experiencing that which makes a proposition true instead of its proxies like criteria. McDowell calls this alternative to the above-described criterial position the *disjunctive conception of appearances*.[15] To explain this, suppose p is "There is a barn in front of me now." Two human agents with normal eyesight, S_1 and S_2, observe two different objects looking like a real barn, and both of them come to believe that p. Suppose further that the object S_1 sees is a real barn, and the one S_2 perceives is fake. We can assume that in both the veridical and deceptive cases of experiencing the satisfaction of criteria (i.e., that the object looks like a barn), the perceptual systems of S_1 and S_2 are presented with the same appearance. But while what S_2 experiences is merely an appearance,

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[10] McDowell 1983, p. 455.
[11] Wright 1984, p. 383.

> we are not to accept that in the non-deceptive [case of S_1] too the object of experience is a mere appearance, and hence something that falls short of the fact itself. On the contrary, we are to insist that the appearance that is presented to [S_1] is a matter of the fact itself being disclosed to the experiencer. So appearances are no longer conceived as in general intervening between the experiencing subject and the world.[16]

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[12] Chisholm 1989, pp. 46-48, 65.

[13] McDowell 1983, p. 458.

[14] *Ibid.*, p. 460.

[15] *Ibid.*, p. 476.

[16] *Ibid.*, p. 472.

According to the "disjunctive conception" of appearances, human agents encounter, in the non-deceptive cases, not merely the satisfaction of some criteria but the relevant fact itself. The occurrence is given, in other words, to the cognitive system directly, not through epistemic proxies. This arguably circumvents the skeptical problems that can be raised in connection with the criterial view for we now rely upon the notion of "an unmediated openness of the experiencing subject to 'external' reality. . . ."[17]

The sort of direct realism McDowell advocates regarding our epistemic access to the truth conditions of our statements has superficial similarities with Davidson's truth-based semantics which aims to get rid of the intermediaries between the agents and the world. The similarities, however, are misleading in that McDowell's entire epistemological program strives to overcome two problematic positions which he sees as the two sides of the same coin: "givenism" and Davidson's holism (or coherentism). In *Mind and World*, McDowell explains his own position in Kantian terms by stating that it amounts to a certain picture of experience—that stands in salient contrast with the aforementioned views—according to which "capacities that belong to spontaneity are in play in actualization of receptivity."[18] Davidson contends that reality imposes causal constraints upon us, not rational ones. And the defenders of "the given" deny that our basic perceptual experiences are informed by the operations of spontaneity. What they both share is the idea that experiences are "extra-conceptual."[19] McDowell maintains, in Sellarsian terms, that those experiences are never outside, or prior to, humans' logical space of reasons or conceptual dealings. He further believes that in this respect we are significantly different from the rest of the animal kingdom. Although human cognizers are not unlike animals in that they are "perceptually sensitive" to their surroundings, they perceive the world around them as shaped and fashioned by spontaneity (or our network of concepts) as a result of some complex process of getting initiated into a particular linguistic and cultural environment beginning at the early ages of infancy.

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[17] *Ibid.*, p. 478.
[18] McDowell 1994, p. 66.
[19] *Ibid.*, p. 68.

I conclude this section by saying that McDowell offers a challenging account which must be taken into account seriously for the purposes of a critique of the actual epistemic function of TC. In the rest of this chapter, I will attempt to shed some light upon the epistemic dimension of the realism-antirealism debate by examining certain crucial aspects of the issue at hand.

7.3. The Concept of "Epistemic Gradient" in Doxastic Webs

One valuable insight of the Davidsonian perspective is that the whole discourse on truth and falsity of our statements can make sense only against the background of a doxastic network which must comprise a large amount of true beliefs—if human error is to be made an intelligible notion.[20] This idea is supported by certain evolutionary considerations as well as by the common observation that rational agents typically encounter no serious difficulties in *interpretation* and *nonverbal action*. Although I find Davidson's account of truth objectionable, I agree with him that our communicative success is to a great extent due to the fact that the members of the actual linguistic communities act in an impressively harmonious fashion in ascribing the same semantic content and truth value to most of the propositions found in their linguistic repertoire. In my opinion, this semantic-alethic success springs from (1) the existence of a mind-independent reality in which we are situated, (2) our sharing a largely similar cognitive structure, and finally, (3) the more or less stable nature of human language. In short, there are sufficiently good reasons to assume that a significant portion of our beliefs about the world are true. I will further assume, without providing any anti-skeptical argument, that the majority of our *observational* beliefs are veridical reflections of the world we live in—retaining, of course, my linguistic Kantian account of the truthmakers and truth-making. We may, quite naturally, sometimes be deceived by visual illusions or get massively mislead about the exact identity of an astronomic object; but there is no apparent reason for accepting—yet numerous pragmatic and naturalist reasons to argue against—the idea that being misinformed about the world is a general rule rather than an exception for the human agents.

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[20] Davidson 1986a, p. 309.

The notion of successful agency requires and entails that there are, to recite Sellar's famous trio, countless introspective, perceptual, and memory (IPM) beliefs within the belief system of an ordinary human cognizer such that it would make little sense to seriously entertain skeptical doubts about those doxastic items. For example, my beliefs that "I exist," "I have a left arm," "There are other minds," "I was brought up by human parents," and (to give a non-IPM instance) "If I jump off a cliff, I will most likely die" are not on a par with a belief like "G. W. Bush fails to show sensitivity on environmental matters" or "Katmandu is the capital of Nepal." The former kind of beliefs are found, to use a Quinean analogy, in close proximity to the "center" of my web of beliefs, and it is rather unlikely that the truth values I attribute to such propositions are really open to revision in the way the latter kind are. As M. Hymers puts it, skeptical scenarios about the former kind of beliefs can only be reckoned as *logical*, as opposed to *real*, possibilities.[21]

In light of these considerations, I claim that *in most cases* of the formation of an observational belief, human agents *must be* experiencing more than just satisfaction of criteria as characterized above. It must be, as McDowell argues, the empirical *fact* itself being disclosed to the experiencer, hence endowing her with the pertinent knowledge.[22] Consider the following example: I am looking at my garden and seeing a single tree there. Is it not more plausible to assume that in this instance I am veridically experiencing that empirical state of affairs itself—which is actually a Situation that can be framed within the borders of my language, not a Tractarian fact embedded in the mind-independent reality—than mere satisfaction of some criteria? Given the fact that the overwhelming majority of our perceptual beliefs are true and that there is a plausibility to the disjunctive conception of appearances with respect to *such* beliefs, this line of reasoning that can be attributed to McDowell seems fairly defensible.

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[21] Hymers 2000, p. 5.

[22] The kind of knowledge acquired here may, however, not be the traditional realist knowledge. I will explain and defend an alternative to such knowledge in the next chapter.

But where does this leave us vis-à-vis the argument offered in Section *7.2*? I submit that McDowell's account not only convincingly highlights the active and irreducible role of the human agents' categories of understanding in the formation of "experiences," but also succeeds in displaying what must lie behind our knowledge claims when they happen to be veridical. There are nonetheless certain reasons to balk at McDowell's suggestion from a broader perspective. The problem here is about what enters into the analysis the epistemologist carries out (and into the definition she ultimately comes up with) as part of her predominantly a priori task. The answer to the question of what we really encounter in successful instances of perceptual representation does not seem to illuminate our predicament concerning the suspicious epistemic status of TC. In order to see the full implications of the point I am trying to make here, we had better consider different kinds of doxastic items—in particular, those beliefs whose formation requires more than a single act of perception. Consider our memory beliefs—especially those residing in our Long Term (Episodic) Memory as opposed to STM. For the instances of such "non-perceptual" beliefs, McDowell's disjunctive account of appearances will have a comparatively restricted use because what satisfies the *truth conditions* of a given human agent's non-perceptual belief that *q* is not as directly presented to *S*'s cognitive system as in the case of perceptual beliefs. According to McDowell, a cognizer can be presented with the experience that another person is pain, not merely with satisfaction of some criteria from which she can infer that the other agent is in pain.[23] It is quite clear that this approach, and the accompanying epistemological optimism, will not work in those cases where the experiencer gets confronted *in an epistemologically opaque way* with the truth conditions (or, in McDowell's terminology, with the actual circumstances that give rise to non-deceptive appearances) pertaining to a non-perceptual belief (e.g., "I believe that this birthday present was given to me 25 years ago," "I believe that the inflation rate this year is higher than the previous"). This means that the anti-ERist argument I have articulated in Section *7.2* seems to undermine the sort of realism endorsed by McDowell especially in relation to those beliefs whose assertability conditions involve something beyond a single act of the subject's sensation or perception. I do not claim here that the anti-realist argument against truth's being a necessary condition of propositional knowledge serves some philosophical purpose within the non-perceptual domain but not for the cases of simple perception. I rather maintain the problems of McDowell's ER can be appreciated best in connection with those cases of *S'*s alleged direct (i.e., unmediated) knowledge of satisfaction of the truth conditions of non-perceptual beliefs.

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[23] McDowell 1983, p. 456.

One crucial implication of this discussion is that we cannot usefully apply the tripartite analysis of knowledge in exactly the same way to various instances of empirical knowledge across the board, regardless of where they fall in our web of beliefs. More clearly, those beliefs which constitute the basis of what we take to be the fundamental presuppositions of rational agency must be subject to the traditional analysis of knowledge in a manner considerably different from those beliefs that we would locate around the periphery of our doxastic web—*if* the former type *really* need to be subject to that tripartite analysis. Take the following three statements:

P_1: I believe that I am alive.
P_2: I believe that I see a blue object on my desk.
P_3: I believe that this birthday present was given to me 25 years ago.
P_4: I believe that the inflation rate this year is higher than the previous.

To begin with, it would arguably be an uninteresting and utterly useless epistemological engagement to assert, or to seriously question, the satisfaction of the *JTB* conditions of P_1 in reality. The kind of doubts related to such propositions are arguably not "real" ones given our common notion of what it effectively is to be an *actual agent* in the world in terms of action or *pragma*, as opposed to an abstract 'S' who is imagined to justifiably believe in an abstract (or unqualified) proposition 'p'. The second proposition, P_2, evidently does not stand as close to the center—in terms of being basic—of an ordinary agent's web of beliefs as the first does. One can, in other words, make a philosophically interesting case about the doxastic and justificatory status or nature of P_2 and raise certain epistemological questions. Beliefs like P_2 are distinguished from the more peripheral ones in that human agents' knowledge of satisfaction of the truth conditions associated with such beliefs are *generally* given in, or emerges im-mediately out of, the very experience of the pertinent appearances in a non-deceptive way, as envisaged by McDowell. This does not mean that beliefs of this kind are indubitably true; it only means that their very nature implies that the great majority of such beliefs, if the Quinean-Davidsonian approach to the notion of agency is on the right track, must indeed be veridical. It is, broadly speaking, a "postulate of reason" that the deceptive cases of perception are exceptional circumstances in our exchange with our environment.

Now contrast the belief given in P_2 with those expressed in P_3 and P_4. The latter two doxastic states must, as I have been suggesting, obviously be "residing" around the periphery of a human agent's doxastic web. Furthermore, such cases are arguably not the "forte" of the explanatory depository of McDowell's realism because there is no clear and distinct "appearance" for P_3 or P_4 that would match a related fact in the actual instances of non-deceptive perception. The point here is not just that the epistemic distance between experiencing satisfaction of *criteria* for a proposition like "The inflation rate this year is higher than the previous" and experiencing satisfaction of the *truth conditions* of this proposition is now considerably greater than what we had in the case of P_2; more critically, it now seems that there is more room for the skeptical (or fallibilist) maneuvers with respect to having cognitive access to the truth conditions of such "peripheral" beliefs.

If the account offered in this section is correct, it seems warranted to draw the conclusion that our actual beliefs are vulnerable to the main criticism of anti-ER at varying degrees depending on their "location" in a doxastic web. While the central (or basic) beliefs are rather immune, on the basis of naturalist and pragmatic considerations, to the threat that their truth can never be checked out by finite human cognizers, the peripheral beliefs appear more prone to the sort of problem I have posed in Section *7.2*. The previous section's discussion suggests a certain picture of the web of beliefs: the doxastic webs possessed by ordinary cognitive agents are structured in such a way that they exhibit some sort of an *epistemic gradient* from the center to the edges of the web. The most central components of a doxastic web are the most reliable items from an epistemological point of view. As move on the web, and along the gradient, we first encounter the simple perceptual beliefs whose conditions of assertability presumably match, for most of such beliefs, their truth conditions.[24] I think this point can be conceded to McDowell without any major quarrels. But our admitting that most of such beliefs must in fact be accurately reflecting the actual states of affairs and that in the non-deceptive cases of perceptual beliefs the experiencer really comes into epistemic contact with those states of affairs (or satisfaction of truth conditions) *do not by themselves show* that truth of propositions of this sort can or must be a *condition* of human agents' knowledge. In short, there is no unproblematic inference from some kind of principle of charity covering our empirical statements to epistemic realism. Quite naturally, an argument of similar character can be produced *a fortiori* for the non-perceptual beliefs like P_3. That is, one can reasonably argue that on the periphery of the epistemic gradient of a typical doxastic web are those items for whom TC causes the most serious epistemological problem of access. It is, I submit, especially for this group of justified beliefs that the *ARist truth*, promoted as a necessary condition of knowledge, serve no actual purpose in the analysis of ordinary propositional knowledge.

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[24] Of course, I do not suggest here that there are definite borders between what I call perceptual beliefs and the rest of our doxastic system.

The moral of this chapter is that ER is, generally speaking, a problematic thesis given that AR's description of 'truth' is correct. The distinction McDowell draws between the veridical and non-veridical cases of an experiencer's being presented with an appearance is an objective or externalist one, and, in this sense, it is ultimately subject to the sort criticism I have raised in this chapter. According to McDowell's externalism, the appearance of a pen, when the experiencer actually perceives a pen, is essentially an experience of the object itself, and not just accidentally so. I concede to McDowell that there *is* reasonably an objective difference between the deceptive and non-deceptive cases of the satisfaction of criteria and that in the latter case human agents really confront the truth conditions of their statements. I nonetheless cannot see how this admission assists a finite cognizer epistemologically vis-à-vis the particular instances of satisfaction of the realist truth condition. The fundamental problem about rendering truth a necessary condition is basically the same in the case of perceptual *and* non-perceptual justified beliefs: there is no non-circular way of making use of TC understood as logically distinct from the justificatory and doxastic conditions. I think for a certain class of our beliefs (i.e., more "central" ones) we cannot intelligibly doubt, given our concept of agency, that the presentation of an appearance to the agent's doxastic system does *in general* coincide with the veridical or non-deceptive presentation of the pertinent fact itself. This pragmatic argument does not, however, entail that a completely external condition like TC can be imposed universally upon the knowledge claims of human agents.

Let us, then, tentatively accept the argument that TC has no epistemic use or function in most of the *actual* cases of knowing—though, I will argue, it has some other use. But what does this show? As I have insisted, we *do* know, after all, a lot of things about the world *although* we may never be certain about them. This is simple common sense, and any theory of knowledge ought, I believe, to accord itself with this fact. Yet, the crucial issue to be discussed in the present context is about the *nature* of *such knowledge* we allegedly do possess, that is, its connection with the realist notion of truth sketched in the preceding section. To put the question simply: *What* do have actually know when we know something?

CHAPTER EIGHT

Metaknowledge

8.1. The KK-Thesis: Affirmations and Denials

Metaphysical realism minimally claims that there is an external reality which is not the creation of minds, languages, and our powers of conceptualization. Alethic realism holds basically that most of our statements bear their truth value independently of the evidential support they have and their justificatory status within a subject's belief system. Epistemic realism is the affirmation of the idea that propositional truth, understood the way alethic realists characterize it, is a necessary condition of propositional knowledge. In Chapter Seven, I have suggested that, for a significant portion of our beliefs and statements, our cognitive access to satisfaction of the truth condition of a given truth-bearer is not something that can be checked out by finite or non-omniscient means. Given the solid fact that we *do* know a great number of things about the world around us, we must now "realistically" assess the amount of epistemic damage the sort of anti-ERist argument I have developed might do with regard to our reliable cognitive access to the truth of our statements. This will involve a discussion of higher-level empirical knowledge and how it gets related to common first-level knowledge. There is *prima facie* a remarkable epistemological difference between these two levels: in the former case the object of knowledge is the cognizer's *own* epistemic state rather than a (mind-independent) fact. Nevertheless, when the matter is viewed from the standpoint of a philosopher who takes epistemic logic seriously, things may look different. It is not uncommon among epistemologists to carry out the task of analyzing an ordinary agent's higher-lever doxastic, justificatory, and epistemic states in such a manner that the cognitive and semantic dimensions of different levels of knowledge is largely left out of the epistemological picture. While philosophers who take the obvious advantage of such abstractions are inculpable from a narrow methodological point of view, it may be beneficial to take a closer look at the resultant picture from a broader perspective and to try to assess its possible shortcomings.

I think we can identify four different analytic approaches in the literature of contemporary epistemology regarding the status of metaknowledge:

A. Categorical Affirmation of the KK-thesis (CA_{KK}): One possible approach to the notion of metaknowledge is to strongly affirm the KK-thesis. The origins of CA_{KK}—and the idea of analyzing metaknowledge from a logical point of view—can be traced back to Hintikka's seminal work (1962) which is inspired by Lewis's modal systems. An axiom of one of those systems is the logical implication $\vdash(Np \supset NNp)$, and the epistemic counterpart of this implication which is recognized as the KK-thesis is the assertion that knowing implies knowing that one knows $\vdash(Ksp \supset Ks(Ksp))$.[1] Obviously, once such a parallel is drawn between logic and epistemology, one can take a next step in accordance with the rule of distribution used in epistemic logic. Employing the tripartite definition of knowledge, we get (ignoring the subject term):

(1) $KKp \leftrightarrow K(Bp \wedge Jp \wedge p)$,

which yields

(2) $KKp \leftrightarrow (BBp \wedge BJp \wedge Bp) \wedge (JBp \wedge JJp \wedge Jp) \wedge (Bp \wedge Jp \wedge p)$,

(3) $KKp \leftrightarrow BBp \wedge BJp \wedge JBp \wedge JJp \wedge Bp \wedge Jp \wedge p$.

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[1] Hilpinen 1970, p. 109.

Making replacements on both sides of $\vdash(Kp \supset KKp)$, we obtain the following analysis:

(4) $\vdash((Bp \wedge Jp \wedge p) \supset (BBp \wedge BJp \wedge JBp \wedge JJp \wedge Bp \wedge Jp \wedge p))$,

(5) $\vdash((Bp \wedge Jp \wedge p) \supset (BBp \wedge BJp \wedge JBp \wedge JJp))$.[2]

I want to make a few general comments at this point concerning the nature of the sort of analysis given above. Notice that we have obtained (5) by employing the traditional tools of formal logic and by assuming the truth of the KK-thesis. Typically, philosophers who do so are also inclined to claim, for instance, that "'Kp', and, say, 'KKKKp' are just two different ways of expressing the same thing in writing (as far as the logic of knowledge is concerned), though the former expression is usually preferable for obvious reasons."[3] Moreover, for philosophers like Hilpinen, it is somehow implicit in the above analysis (1) to (5) that different levels of epistemic states are on a par in terms of their epistemic function; the first and the second K's in 'KKp' denote one and the same "knowing that." From a purely epistemic-logical point of view, K acts like a function whose argument can be either an empirical proposition q or an epistemic proposition like KKKq. Hence, a philosopher defending CA_{KK} would argue that so far as the epistemological analysis is concerned there is no need to be preoccupied with the fact that knowledge is an actual epistemic state (rather than a 'K' as an epistemic operator) whose realization within an agent's cognitive structure may occur in different senses at different levels. There is, the argument goes, one interpretation of the epistemic operator 'K' and it is the same both at the first level and for the iterated ones.

Hintikka's strong interpretation, where the thesis of metaknowledge is asserted indiscriminately for all higher levels of knowledge, is certainly not the only one available for the believers of CA_{KK}. K. Lehrer, for instance, maintains that certain well-known objections against the KK-thesis do not actually succeed in showing that the thesis is flawed.[4] However, unlike Hilpinen, Lehrer does *not* defend the thesis for levels higher than the second.[5] This version of CA_{KK} has its advantages in comparison to Hilpinen's since the latter is apparently bound to encounter serious difficulties. I will examine these later.

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[2] *Ibid.*, p. 112.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 126.

B. Fallibilistic Affirmation of the KK-thesis (FA_{KK}): Another affirmative approach to the KK-thesis is the more modest claim that it is not totally impossible for us to know that we do know a certain proposition. R. Feldman, for example, has attempted to avoid the "extremist" attitudes with respect to metaknowledge by propounding a fallibilist version of the KK-thesis. The idea is essentially that we must, at least sometimes, be able to know (fallibilistically) that we know. Feldman uses the formula

(6) $Kp \leftrightarrow Bp \wedge Jp \wedge p \wedge U^{j}p$,

(where '$U^{j}p$' stands for 'the justification that S possesses for believing that p is undefective') in order to analyze KKp,[6] obtaining

(7) $KKp \leftrightarrow BKp \wedge JKp \wedge Kp \wedge U^{j}(Kp)$,

(where '$U^{j}(Kp)$' stands for 'the justification that S possesses for believing that S knows that p is undefective') and arrives at the conclusion that our ability to possess metaknowledge ultimately hinges upon whether or not JKp is feasible for us.[7] Given that

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[4] To give an example, it might be argued that when a person responds to a question by saying first "I don't know," and a few seconds later, "Wait, I know, it is x," then (assuming that his answer is correct) we must say that the person at first knew the answer *without* knowing that he knew. Lehrer (1970, pp. 134-135) opposes this counter-argument by maintaining that he actually did *not* know the answer when he said "I don't know."

[5] To be more precise, he thinks that the doxastic strength gets attenuated as we ascend to higher levels.

[6] Feldman does not take the term 'undefective' to be a well-understood term. He says "it is merely a fill-in for whatever the fourth condition for knowledge turns out to be" (Feldman 1996, p. 269, endnote 5).

(8) $JKp \leftrightarrow JBp \wedge JJp \wedge Jp \wedge J(U^{j}p)$,

Feldman goes on to argue that all four conjuncts on the right side of the equivalence in (8) are satisfiable by human cognizers and, hence, "the argument for metaepistemological skepticism fails, and fallibilists can hold that people can, and do, know that they know."[8]

Feldman's FA_{KK} does *not*, it must be emphasized, assert that we can have *infallible* knowledge about our epistemic states. Rather, the claim is that an ordinary subject S *can* have *fallible* knowledge that S knows that p, and that it depends, *inter alia* (but chiefly), upon S's having justified belief (or evidence) that her justification for believing that p is undefective or sufficient.[9] And finally, unlike CA_{KK}, FA_{KK} does *not* guarantee that metaknowledge is a free lunch that comes with each and every instance of first-level knowledge.

C. Fallibilistic Denial of the KK-thesis (FD_{KK}): Another "moderate" approach to metaknowledge is that an epistemic agent's knowing a certain proposition p does *not* imply his knowing that he knows that p. To put it simply, the KK-thesis is wrong.[10] According to Nozick, a cognizer "can track the fact that p without also tracking the fact that [she is] tracking p."[11] Similarly, Chisholm thinks that a person can have knowledge on a certain matter without having any "insight" into her epistemic status.[12] Both of these philosophers hold that we actually *do* know propositions. However, this first-level knowledge does *not*, they contend, require or imply any higher-level knowledge. In this sense, FD_{KK} is only a negative claim about the intrinsic connection between first-level knowledge and metaknowledge.

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[7] *Ibid.*, p. 262.
[8] *Ibid.*, p. 263.
[9] *Ibid.*, p. 269.
[10] As one can observe, the fallibilistic affirmation and fallibilistic denial of the KK-thesis are not entirely different positions—though they clearly differ in emphasis. I have nevertheless chosen to present them separately in order to reflect exactly how the thesis is treated in the pertinent literature.
[11] Nozick 1981, p. 246.
[12] Chisholm 1989, pp. 99-100.

D. Categorical Denial of the KK-thesis (CD_{KK}): CA_{KK} is not the only "radical" attitude towards the tenability of the KK-thesis (and the possibility of metaknowledge). At the opposite end is the claim that we are shut out from higher levels of knowledge absolutely.[13] It is interesting to note one issue running between FA_{KK} and the present claim, CD_{KK}. The former asserts that just as we *sometimes* know that p, we can, in a similar vein, *sometimes* know that we know that p. CD_{KK}, on the other hand, amounts to the claim that although we *sometimes* know that p, we, normal human cognizers, can *never* know that we know that p. I will offer a more detailed examination of the "denial camp" later in this chapter.

8.2. Going Beyond Extensional Equivalence

I think it is evident that philosophers who employ the tools of epistemic logic in scrutinizing metaknowledge commonly subscribe to ER. One common feature of the theories of metaknowledge I have briefly surveyed above is that the nature of the doxastic, justificatory and alethic components that contribute to the formation of lower and higher epistemic states is tacitly taken by those epistemologists either as unproblematically understood and utilized at a basic intuitive level (as in the case of propositional truth), or as representable in most general terms (e.g., as an all-encompassing 'J' in the analysis). This enables the theoreticians of metaknowledge to carry out epistemic-logical analyses without getting bogged down in elaborate discussions on the exact identity of such concepts as epistemic justification. Overlooking the famous rivalries in justification (i.e., externalism versus internalism and foundationalism versus coherentism) and dealing with the most general form of 'J' has the obvious methodological advantage that the highest degree of systematicity and logical precision can be achieved in the analysis of metaknowledge. A similar point can also be made with respect to TC. The philosophers engaged in the task of analyzing metaknowledge seem to produce their works on the secure basis of AR and ER which appear as basic assumptions somewhat purged of epistemological and alethic details and excitement—as nicely exemplified by the theories of Hilpinen and Feldman.

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[13] See Popper (1975); Suppe (1989, *circa* p. 313); and Tienson (1996). Goldman (1986, p. 30) calls this position "iterative skepticism."

Despite the methodological advantages of treating human agents' epistemic states as universal 'K's, such simplifications can hinder our getting an accurate picture of the actual cognizers' epistemic performances at different levels of 'K'. Take, for instance, Hilpinen's claim that there is no real difference between the first-level knowledge and those at higher levels. The above-mentioned methodological simplification seems to take its toll in such an instance for there are undoubtedly miscellaneous epistemological or semantic factors that must enter into an adequate account of basic and higher epistemic levels, including certain critical issues about the intensional and extensional aspects of the truth-making relation and pertinent truthmakers.[14] To give another example, Feldman attempts to solve the problem of metaknowledge by trying to show, through a number of logical steps, that the possibility of KKp boils down to that of JKp as he breaks down the original expression to its (alleged) constitutive elements, and focusing on the "critical conjuncts" in order to arrive at the ultimate kernel or decisive core of the higher-level knowledge. Of course, Feldman does offer epistemic arguments to make his analysis of the KK-thesis a tenable one. However, what is being missed among all those technicalities is the *Übersicht* of the issue, viz., what it really *means* for an *actual* cognizer to have metaknowledge. A satisfactory analysis on this matter should touch upon such niceties as the epistemic/semantic considerations which are often put aside in the work of the epistemic logician. As one should expect, different construals of our basic philosophical notions may yield substantially different epistemological accounts.

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[14] Not to mention that it has been reached without paying any due attention to the psychological studies on the cognitive structures and processes of humans which yield, as their output, doxastic and epistemic states.

R. L. Kirkham has made a valuable contribution to the literature by drawing our attention to the fact that when philosophers attempt to define propositional truth, they may not always be dealing with exactly the same philosophical problem—whether they are aware of it or not. He broadly distinguishes the *intensional* dimension of the task of defining truth from the *extensional* one and maintains that while the latter is about the necessary and sufficient conditions to be satisfied for a proposition to be true, the former concerns the meaning of the term 'true'. Kirkham believes that the extensional project is a metaphysical one in that it "attempts to identify what truth consists in, what it is for a statements (or belief or proposition, etc.) to be true."[15] To put it differently, it is an attempt to fix the denotation or reference of the predicate 'is true'. The intensional project, on the other hand, is part of what he calls the speech-act project; its main aim is to fix the intension or connotation of the truth-predicate. Kirkham spells out the relevance of these projects to the task of defining propositional truth as follows:

> If we conceive of the *definition* of 'truth' as a statement of the necessary and sufficient conditions for something's being true, then, of course, an extensional theory of truth does provide a definition of 'truth'. But on at least one other understanding of what a definition does, this type of truth theory does *not* provide a definition. For this type of theory does not answer the question What is the meaning of 'true', 'truth', and 'is true'? It does not attempt to find an expression that is synonymous with any of these terms.[16]

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[15] Kirkham 1992, p. 20.

[16] *Ibid.*, p. 22.

It is in this sense that the Tarskian T-schema, for instance, is not a definition (or explication) of propositional truth. Similarly, a purely epistemic-logical approach tells us very little about the meaning of the higher level knowledge. Take the pertinent biconditional:

(3) $KKp \leftrightarrow BBp \wedge BJp \wedge JBp \wedge JJp \wedge Bp \wedge Jp \wedge p$.

It seems to follow from Kirkham's distinction that although one may regard this logical expression as providing the extensional equivalent, or the necessary and sufficient conditions, of "S knows that S knows that p," it is yet unlikely that we do get a good understanding of metaknowledge from the complex conjunctive expression on the right hand side of the biconditional. In Chapter 10, I will offer a different perspective on the notions of intension and extension—and on the two projects described by Kirkham. In the present context, however, we can make a general point by indicating that it is one thing to know the putative extensional equivalents of terms like 'truth' and 'knowledge', yet quite another to have a good grasp of their meaning. When the semantic and pragmatic elements are erased from the picture, not only do we get deprived of a clear understanding of the terms we are attempting to define but also obtain such implausible accounts as Armstrong's ontological or noumenal theory of propositional truth which fails spectacularly in handling the alethic issues.

Although I do *not* in general think that the epistemic-logical analyses of metaknowledge have no philosophical value at all, I fail to see how they can facilitate an adequate *understanding* of human beings' higher-level knowledge. More specifically, I doubt that such analyses are really as useful and enlightening as the ones produced for the basic-level of propositional knowledge. One important reason is that while all the three conditions in the classical (realist) tripartite definition of knowledge seem to be independent from one another to a sufficient degree, this is presumably not the case in the somewhat murky case of the logical analysis of metaknowledge. Remember that according to Feldman the possibility of second level knowledge is contingent upon that of an agent's being justified to know that p. And given the biconditonal

(8) $JKp \leftrightarrow JBp \wedge JJp \wedge Jp \wedge J(U^{j}p)$,

Feldman maintains that JKp is an attainable epistemic state because the epistemic-doxastic state described by the complex expression $(JBp \wedge JJp \wedge Jp \wedge J(U^{j}p))$ is attainable for a given S. We must nonetheless note that the way the individual conjuncts in that expression relate to each other is rather different from the way the three elements are related to one another in the *JTB* formula. Whereas the three conjuncts of the tripartite definition are sufficiently independent from one another in the latter case, one can raise an issue for a biconditional like (8) regarding the independence—or, rather, lack thereof—of some of the conjuncts from certain others. Consider Jp and $J(U^{j}p)$ in the context of actual justificatory practices of human agents. Without a doubt, there are conditions under which S might be justified in believing that p: "I see a red object" (e.g., an object's being present before S, and its looking red) that *are* distinct from conditions that would justify S in believing that her basic justification is not defective (e.g., the room's being illuminated with a white light rather than red light, and one's rarely being deceived in the past in such cases). However, in such cases, satisfying the latter simply reinforces and increases the total justification or evidence for p, and makes one more justified in belief. From the standpoint of the epistemic agent who putatively knows that p, this additional evidence is part of his total justification for p, and whether he is justified in believing p on the basis of his evidence depends on his total evidence related to p. Further, this additional evidence may even be necessary to increase his total justification to the grade required for knowledge. In any case, the total justification S has in the case at hand is still defeasible justification and so whether S knows that p depends on the satisfaction of some no-defeater (or non-defective) clause.[17]

It seems that there are good reasons for trying to get a philosophically broader (to wit, non-extensionalist) perspective over the question of propositional metaknowledge. Accordingly, I will offer in Section *8.4* a certain *interpretation* or *explication of the meaning of metaknowledge* in the light of my discussion of realism(s) in epistemology and, particularly my distrust for ER. The way I understand the term, such an "interpretation" is different from the epistemic-logical analyses in that it attempts to give a distinctively epistemological account of the cognitive achievement of a human agent who is said to possess higher-level propositional knowledge. This notion is motivated by my belief that the whole epistemic-logical debate surrounding the KK-thesis can hardly provide us with what we really need to know about the epistemological nature and significance of metaknowledge or that the logical analyses can be a substitute for epistemological explications.

8.3. Strong and Weak Realism About Metaknowledge

Let us, then, evaluate the KK-thesis against the background of such an epistemological agenda and try to see if realism can deal with the issues about metaknowledge properly. Hilpinen's CA_{KK} asserts that the first and higher-level K's (in epistemic formulas like KKKp) are not much different in terms of their epistemic function. Hence, CA_{KK} à la Hilpinen tells us that whenever S knows that p, S *ipso facto* knows that S knows that p, and S knows that S knows that S knows that p, and so on indefinitely. The *implicit* assumption of CA_{KK} is, of course, that the classical tripartite analysis (hence, ER) and the claim that truth is nonepistemic (AR) are essentially correct. In order to question this strong realist claim about metaknowledge, take the following empirical proposition p_0:

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[17] I owe these interesting observations to Bruce Hunter.

(9) p_0: Aristotle was born in Stagira.

Assume p_0 is known by S; hence we have:

(10) p_1: S knows$_1$ that p_0.

Having established p_1 as the expression of S's epistemic state at the first level, we can write down a number of statements about his meta-level knowledge as follows:

(11) p_2: S knows$_2$ that S knows$_1$ that p_0,

and generally,

(12) p_i: S knows$_i$ that S knows$_{i-1}$ that . . . S knows$_1$ that p_0.

Let us rewrite the statements (9), (10), and (11) by emphasizing the realist assumptions.

(13) p_0: It holds in reality that Aristotle was born in Stagira.

(14) p_1: S knows$_1$ (the true$_1$ proposition) that it holds in reality that Aristotle was born in Stagira.

(15) p_2: S knows$_2$ (the true$_2$ proposition) that S knows$_1$ (the true$_1$ proposition) that it holds in reality that Aristotle was born in Stagira.

I will argue that (15) presents an epistemological problem for the realist. To this end, I will discuss two arguments voiced against Hilpinen's CA_{KK}, how he responds to them, and why his counter-arguments fail.[18] Firstly, it seems that the KK-thesis brings about the unpalatable consequence that we apparently have no knowledge at all. This is because if knowledge must come with metaknowledge, the possibility of plain human knowledge is seriously jeopardized for a simple reason: we can never be sure that we *really* do know. Hilpinen's response to this objection is that just as we can be uncertain at the first level of knowledge, we can equally and legitimately be so at the higher level(s). Let us think about this claim for a moment. As I have mentioned, we can safely assume that Hilpinen regards the KK-thesis realistically, that is, he holds that both lower and higher levels of truth are described by AR and the level-specific TCs (from level zero to level i) are employed all the way down. Take statements (14) and (15) given above. If (14) is true, it is an example of empirical knowledge at the first level, and S's alethic connection to (14) seems to be established principally due to the presumed strength of the justification S has for (9). According to (14), S is epistemically successful in that her belief in (9) is not only true but also adequately justified. The first level of (realist) knowledge is then, despite being fallible, a reasonably good veridical connection with reality. If, however, (15) also happens to be true, we get a fairly different epistemic picture because S now knows$_2$ that her justified belief in (9) *is* true AR-ly. Let us focus on the question of what such knowledge$_2$ really amounts to for ordinary cognizers. Now S happens to know$_2$ the following: her doxastic connection to (9) is actually veridical. The crux of the present argument is that this might not have been a very interesting situation had the epistemic and alethic conditions of S's metaknowledge not been laid in realist terms. In that case, the non-realist component in the analysis—be that the epistemic, alethic, or both—would allow us to maintain that S's knowing that she knows would be less than knowing the satisfaction of the realist truth-condition of p. But with AR and ER, S is seemingly elevated to an epistemic state where she is doing something extraordinary that could never have been done at the first level. She is actually checking out the satisfaction of what makes the statement "Aristotle was born in Stagira" true. There is, however, no need to stop there; S can apparently do even better than this epistemically. Climbing one more level in the epistemic ladder, S would be said to know$_3$ the satisfaction of the realist truth-conditions of the proposition "S knows$_2$ that S knows$_1$ that p." With such invaluable information, S arguably can, somewhere along the metaepistemic line, practically terminate her adventure of finding out the truth of (9). But if this is so, Hilpinen is wrong in claiming that "'Kp', and, 'KKKKp' are just two different ways of expressing the same thing." The fact of the matter (if we buy the realist construal) is that while S only justifiably believes in the true proposition p at the first level, she gets (on a scale of doxastic/epistemic strength ranging from "weak probability" to "absolute certainty")[19] something alarmingly close to certainty in connection with that proposition as she epistemically ascends to a higher level for p. Moreover, Hilpinen is mistaken in thinking that if one can be uncertain about Kp, she can also be so about KKp. Rather, we must say that realist metaknowledge, if/when happens, seems to diminish uncertainty significantly at certain other levels.[20]

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[18] Hilpinen 1970, pp. 125-126.

Notice also that if it is a *fact* that S realistically knows that he knows that p, we may reasonably infer that the gap between evidence and truth (of the first level) is thus somehow bridged for S epistemically. This follows naturally if KKp means (for the realist) *truly knowing* that there exists some kind of correspondence between a first-level belief of S and the (content of the) believed proposition. The problem is that in this case S seems to perfectly *know* that his empirical belief corresponds to the mind-independent reality. It remains to be elaborated and justified in epistemological terms whether or how the logical gap between evidence and truth can *actually* be closed up (as a result of ascending to a higher epistemic level). If my argument about ER is correct, we do not generally have good reasons to be sanguine about the possibility of demonstrating that such a realist level-ascent is intelligible for human cognizers. Besides, it is highly unlikely that a realist would welcome the idea of getting rid of the gap between our doxastic states and what makes a proposition true with such a brisk move.

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[19] See Chisholm (1989, p. 16) for a fine-tuned and all-encompassing "epistemic hierarchy."

[20] See Nozick (1981, p. 247) who mentions in passing the possibility of the sort of interpretation I am advocating here.

The second problem Hilpinen tackles is that admitting the KK-thesis opens up an epistemic floodgate which would give way to the flow, into our epistemic/cognitive system, not only of KKp but, more intolerably, of countless levels of metaknowledge which, arguably, we are incapable of holding. And this can be used as a *reductio* to show that the KK-thesis is mistaken. As I have mentioned above, Hilpinen responds to this by saying that as far as the logic of the matter is concerned, first and higher levels of knowledge are not actually different. Kp and KKKKp are just "two ways of expressing the same thing." In other words, since both of these expressions have "the same truth conditions," there is not a regress in this situation. It must be clear by now that this argument is bound to fail for the realist. The truth condition of Kp requires the cognizer to justifiably believe a true proposition whereas that of KKp necessitates that she *knows* that she justifiably believes a *true* proposition. If we take the semantics and epistemological dimension of the issue into consideration, and if both AR and ER are accepted as correct theses, we are inevitably led to the conclusion that ordinary statements of human knowledge and metaknowledge clearly have different truth conditions.

It should come as little surprise that a purely extensionalist account like CA_{KK}, where truth and knowledge are construed realistically, cannot enlighten us about the actual character of the subject's epistemic achievement at different levels of propositional knowledge. In other words, what is being implied and required *epistemologically* by the realist KK-thesis cannot be found in the conjuncts given on the right hand side of the biconditonal expression (3). This is mainly because the realist definition of propositional knowledge comes with a distinct *alethic* component which externalistically secures the subject's veridical connection by means of TC. The point I want to stress is that the component pertaining to the agent's veridical epistemic access—which is by definition irreducible for the realist to the justificatory and doxastic elements—to p somehow gets lost in the doxastic-justificatory portion of the extensional equivalent of KKp, that is, $(BBp \wedge BJp \wedge JBp \wedge JJp \wedge Bp \wedge Jp)$. Metaknowledge, understood in realist terms, has critical implications about human beings' ability to connect themselves veridically to reality, and this kind of connection can certainly *not* be captured in such a conjunction. We seem to need a different and more explanatory interpretation of the higher-level knowledge from the one given by the extensional analyses. More about this later.

Therefore, *given the realist framework*, we cannot successfully defend the "strong" realist position (CA_{KK}) that a realistically construed Kp implies a realistically construed KKp. Consequently, the realist ought, it seems, to find another way of incorporating the KK-thesis in epistemological realism.

Consider now the denial of the KK-thesis, as in CD_{KK}. In this case too, given our realist assumptions, knowledge is justified true belief where truth is construed as independent of our epistemic states, and the iterated K's are also interpreted realistically as they are in the "strong" version. However, we drop the meta-level condition that the correspondence between the physical world and the cognitive agent's epistemic state be known to the agent. It suffices only that such a correspondence really takes place at the first-level. It is essential in this version that epistemic (or, more broadly, doxastic) states are wholly or partly *externalized*. While the internalist, viz., the defender of CA_{KK} or FA_{KK}, typically requires that $\vdash(Bp \supset BBp)$, $\vdash(Jp \supset JJp)$, $\vdash(Jp \supset BJp)$, $\vdash(Kp \supset BKp)$, etc.,[21] the externalist, generally speaking, does not. In internalism, logical implications can be further strengthened via transformation to biconditional relations; consequently, BBp and JBp reduce to Bp, BJp and JJp to Jp. The externalist, on the other hand, is not impressed by internalism's emphasis on "*accessibility* to justifying reason" or "*awareness* of one's own doxastic states." Thus, he seems to be immune to the criticism I have posed for CA_{KK}.

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[21] See Lehrer (1970) and Hilpinen (1970).

Let us then examine such an externalistic-realist thesis. Feyerabend's argument in favor of such a move, for instance, can be cast, I suppose, as the following *modus tollens*:[22]

> It can be known that p corresponds to reality *only if* it can be shown in experience that p corresponds to reality.
>
> It can *not* be shown in experience that p corresponds to reality.
>
> ∴ It can *not* be known that p corresponds to reality.

Hence, Feyerabend is a supporter of CD_{KK}. Accordingly, one *can* know a true proposition, but what one cannot know is whether or not such correspondence is really taking place. This is just because the empirical means we possess are not sufficient to ascertain the truth of propositions. Externalism shows up at this point: the fitting between p and S's corresponding doxastic state is asserted to be a factual relation which occurs outside the cognitive structure of S, and which need not be known by S. Suppose p is "The mean Earth-Sun distance is 1.496×10^8 km." If S believes, with adequate evidence, that p and if p is really the case, we grant him knowledge of p even though S does not (and may never) know he stumbled upon it.

On the basis of what I have said about ER, I argue that the most salient problem with this "weak" realism is that it risks the security of its epistemic ground by tying it to some ghostly ontology. The crucial point here is *not* that S need not know the correspondence between a proposition he justifiably believes and the physical world, but, rather, that *nobody* seems able to achieve it, at for a significant portion of our empirical statements.[23] The reasoning here is mainly as follows:

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[22] See Suppe 1989, p. 313.

> A cognizer knows that the truth condition of the tripartite definition is satisfied, *only if* he can ascertain the truth of empirical propositions.
>
> Non-omniscient cognizers can *not* ascertain the truth of empirical propositions.
>
> ∴ Non-omniscient cognizers can *not* know that the truth condition of the tripartite definition is satisfied.

Recall that FD_{KK} and CD_{KK} exempt *any* knower from knowing that the proposition he justifiably believes is true. My point, however, is that once this step has been taken, we must also take the next one and envisage a total epistemic picture where all of the non-omniscient cognizers (not just one unfortunate S) are strictly unable to have such knowledge. The disturbing upshot of all this is that nobody may know, it seems, whether his justified belief is knowledge or not, since one condition of knowledge cannot be verified to hold. In the externalized version of realism, every cognitive agent is epistemically blindfolded and all one can hope is to luckily hit on the truths. The dramatic consequence of dispensing with KsKsp is that Ksp ceases to be a reliable indicator of truth from the standpoint of any knower. I do not know if the externalistic realist can then embrace such "knowledge" as a means of correct representation; nor do I think that he was initially conscious of the unacceptable epistemological consequences of his seemingly innocent externalization. It may understandably appear innocent because it is meant just to exempt the knower from checking out the truth condition of the tripartite definition and simultaneously to allow that he knows.

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[23] In the preceding chapter, I talked about the concept of epistemic gradient and argued that a certain class of our truth-bearers (i.e., non-perceptual ones) are especially vulnerable to the anti-ERist attack. The same proviso is valid in the context of my discussion of metaknowledge as well. In other words, those doxastic items which are found around the periphery of a human agent's web of beliefs are the ones with which the realist view (ER *cum* AR) will have the greatest theoretical difficulties with respect to that cognizer's knowing that he knows.

However, as I have argued, this way of putting the matter hinders one's realizing that this is not simply a problem for some S; rather, it is perhaps the greatest epistemological problem for all non-omniscient cognizers. Hence, turning to FD_{KK} and CD_{KK}—and holding on to *realism regarding truth and knowledge*—we seem to end up with the latter no matter which one we have opted for at the outset. If this is the case, we will have every reason to doubt the reliability of the kind of knowledge described in this section. Therefore, the "weak" (or "externalistic") realism cannot fare any better with respect to the problem of metaknowledge—if AR and ER are presumed to be correct.[24] In this section we have canvassed the two radical realist attitudes with respect to metaknowledge and found out that they have certain objectionable consequences. Before exploring further options, I want to turn to a matter I have brought up and the promissory note related to it: given the fact that biconditional expressions like (3) give us extensional equivalences but not the meaning of 'KK', we seem to need to provide an epistemological construal or explication of the higher level epistemic states of human cognizers.

8.4. The Meaning of Metaknowledge

According to my argument in the preceding section, both the strong affirmation *and* strong denial of the KK-thesis cause a problem for the realist regarding human agents' epistemic access to the satisfaction of the truth conditions of empirical truth-bearers. The traditional definition of propositional knowledge implies that if a cognitive agent S knows that p, then TC of p is satisfied—that is, the assertoric content of S's belief that p is a veridical one. This certainly does not mean that S is aware of the fact that she is in such an epistemic state. But when we say that S additionally knows (realistically) that S knows that p, we are in effect saying that S is conscious of the fact that her doxastic connection to p is *actually veridical*. In that case, S knows, in a peculiar way, that she does not have to search any further about the truth of p. Of course, such "consciousness" cannot be an accurate representation of finite cognizers' higher-level knowledge. If, however, we deny the KK-thesis and maintain that the basic-level realist knowledge does not require or entail higher-levels of realist knowledge, then we should wonder whether our ordinary epistemic states are really as reliable as we normally suppose them to be.

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[24] The criticisms directed to externalistic justification somehow parallel my criticism of realistic externalism regarding knowledge. Compare my criticisms to those of BonJour (1985) which has been one of the most devastating attacks against externalism (although he is a realist with regard to knowledge).

We can now raise the question of how we can "interpret" higher-level knowledge in such a way that it presents itself as a meaningful epistemic success term for actual subjects. I offer the following account in light of my arguments and insinuations thus far. Putting it in terms of the previous chapter's discussion, if S (ER-ly) knows, at a sufficiently high level of metaknowledge, that S (ER-ly) knows that p, she must *eo ipso* be in a position to *check out the fulfillment or satisfaction of the truth condition of p*. And this is mainly because the realistically understood higher-level K's in, for example, the logical function KKKp are all predicated upon the nonepistemic truth of p. To see this more vividly, let us iterate metaknowledge to the third level, obtaining

(16) $K_3(K_2(Kp)) \leftrightarrow K_3(K_2(Bp \wedge Jp \wedge p))$.

As I have argued above, if p is nonepistemic and all K's here are taken realistically, K_3 essentially tells us that S veridically knows$_3$ that she veridically knows$_2$ a nonepistemic truth. This epistemic state, I claim, is an instance of checking out the truth condition of p—to a degree higher than what would happen with S's having only K_2 but, arguably, lower than what would epistemically obtain with S's having K_4. Under these circumstances, if S is not certain about the truth of p at the third epistemic level (and I am not sure if such a metaknower would not be certain at that level), then she will clearly attain certainty at a higher level.

What about the realist's denial of the KK-thesis? My understanding of the common denominator of FD_{KK} and CD_{KK} is that the statement that a cognizer can ER-ly know a proposition *without* knowing at the same time that he knows it amounts simply to the claim that the cognizer is *not* required to check out the truth condition of the tripartite definition—beyond the extent that he has already done that at the first level. In short, the denial case is more or less a mirror image of the affirmation. Consequently, both the friends and foes of the KK-thesis can reasonably articulate their realist conception of metaknowledge in terms of the agent's "epistemic responsibility" towards the nonepistemic truth condition of the tripartite definition. This explication I offer differs from a purely extensionalist account—which does not go beyond providing equivalence relations—in that it aims to preserve and expose, against the background of its salient epistemological (viz., ER-ist) presuppositions, the alethic message concealed in the expression "S knows that S knows." And my conviction is that this interpretation or explication follows naturally if we take the *realist conception* of *truth* and *knowledge* seriously.[25]

The account given above can be challenged in several ways. First of all, it may be claimed that the externalist actually does allow checking of TC; it is only via epistemic justification, rather than directly by way of the satisfaction of the nonepistemic truth condition. In other words, we can reasonably employ a weaker notion of checking out the satisfaction of TC, i.e., that of having good evidential support for a belief. But my argument does not say anything against the possibility of *such* support. It only points out that there is a logical gap for the realist between epistemic justification and nonepistemic truth, and that the knower need not, according to the externalist, check out the truth condition independently of the original justification condition.

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[25] In my interpretation of metaknowledge, I set aside the question of what would be an adequate theory of epistemic justification because, first of all, I do not have a well-formed theory of justification and, second, I believe that my account here might have some meaning and use, if any at all, on its own without being supplemented with a justificatory theory.

It may also be claimed that a fallibilist-realist affirmation of the KK-thesis, e.g., Feldman's FA_{KK}, is actually all we need in order to overcome the problems stated in the previous section in connection with the more radical approaches. According to Feldman's fallibilist account, one can know that he knows in those cases where he justifiably believes that his first-level justification is undefective. This view is admittedly a more plausible one in that it claims neither that metaknowledge is some kind of free lunch coming with all instances of plain knowledge nor that we are unconditionally barred from higher-level epistemic states. We must, nonetheless, not lose sight of the fact that Feldman's account is an extensionalist and realist one. Its extensionalism and the resultant reduction of KK to the doxastic-justificatory biconditional given in (8) make it susceptible to the objection I raised against that sort of analyses in relation with my understanding of the meaning of metaknowledge. And its realism can be responded to by providing, *mutatis mutandis*, an argument of the kind given in the previous paragraph. That is, even a fallibilist version of the affirmation of the KK-thesis must, *given the realist tenets*, demand that the satisfaction of the truth condition of a belief be realized nonepistemically, not by way of evidence or justification. There will, of course, be certain "weaker" or "operational" instances of checking out TC; but those justificatory acts or states are not what underlies the realist's discourse about metaknowledge. Feldman's fallibilism, as long as it remains essentially an extensionalist and ER-ist account, is not a viable solution to the problem of actual agents' higher-level empirical knowledge.

8.5. Knowing "Modestly" That One Knows

I will defend in this section a non-extensionalist and anti-ERist version of Feldman's FA_{KK}. In order to materialize this, I will briefly talk about a distinction R. Almeder (1992) makes in defending his "Blind Realism" which has certain similarities with the account I have propounded here. The distinction is between two types of propositional truth. In a strong sense, truth may be understood along the lines of classical correspondence theory, and, therefore, its nature is described by Alethic Realism (I will let T_s stand for such truth). There is yet another, a weaker notion of truth (T_w for short) which is, properly speaking, the only one epistemically open to us. It is the kind of truth which is *not* independent of the best justification available to the knower in any given situation. The difference between the two is obvious: T_s, unlike T_w, is a semantic—rather than an epistemic—notion. Almeder argues that T_s is an entirely useless one for our epistemic purposes for we seem to have no access to the former but merely to the latter. Moreover, if we could "reach" such truth by "seeing directly," there would be absolutely no need whatsoever for evidence or justification. Viewed from a different perspective, epistemic justification is not a means at all to arrive at T_s.[26] It is, then, possible to define two kinds of knowledge paralleling the two sorts of truth described above. Both of kinds are defined as "justified true belief." In the strong sense, K_s requires truth to be T_s while the weaker notion, K_w, needs nothing more than T_w as its truth condition. The strong knowledge, K_s, is an "empty" one from a practical point of view; it is only the weak one, K_w, which we can intelligibly talk about.

Almeder calls his position "Blind Utopian Realism," which comprises both the ideas depicted above and also a kind of Peircean optimism which takes the form of asserting that the number of correct beliefs (that is, those which hit on T_s) will keep on increasing until all of our non-trivial empirical questions get answered by science in some distant future. For the purposes of this study, I will put the latter aspect of his theory aside and focus on the "blind" dimension of his proposal. His Blind Realism comprises the following tenets:[27]

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[26] I take it that according to Almeder justification *is* a means to arrive at T_W.

> T1. Even if we abandon the correspondence theory of truth, we would still *know*, that is, be completely authorized in believing, that there is an external world, a world of objects whose existence is neither logically nor causally dependent on the existence of any number of human minds or knowers;
>
> T2. At any given time, some of our presently completely authorized beliefs about the external world . . . must, as a contingent matter of fact, and in some important measure, correctly describe the external world; and
>
> T3. We cannot justifiably say, justifiably pick out, or otherwise establish by appeal to any reliable decision procedure, *which* of our presently completely authorized beliefs do correctly describe the external world.

Almeder's "Blind Realism" shares a common intuition with my way of regarding realism in epistemology. In my characterization, *both* T_s *and* T_w are generated within particular conceptual schemes or Frameworks, never in the external, in-itself reality. One important qualification I would add in connection with the epistemological side of the account is that our epistemic access to truth of our truth-bearers is not, as I have argued in the previous chapter, uniform across our doxastic system: such access is less problematic in perceptual beliefs and presumably rather unproblematic for those residing at the center of the ordinary cognitive agents' webs of belief.

There is nonetheless a general issue about the exact nature of weak truth and knowledge, especially in contrast with our well-defined semantic-epistemic notions like strong (i.e., nonepistemic) truth, justified belief, etc., in that it not clear how these "weak" terms can be adequately defined. Still, it makes epistemological sense to suppose that there is an intermediary doxastic-epistemic state between sufficiently justified belief and veridical epistemic contact with the truth condition of a given belief. It may not be possible to offer a precise definition of T_w, but the whole idea can be made intuitively clear. Suppose our science and technology can establish, at their best, that the number of craters on a distant planet D is N. Assume that the correct number is N+1 and that it is definitely impossible for human beings, present and future, to discover this fact. In such a case, the proposition p: "There are N+1 craters on the surface of D" is a T_s, and even though our belief that q: "There are N craters on the surface of D" is a perfectly justified one, it is not, strictly speaking, a K_s. However, there is something extremely dubious about the claim that our justified true belief that q is not actually knowledge. We may grant, from an ARist standpoint, that the objective truth is not q but p. Yet, the proposition p is, from a God's eye point of view, beyond our epistemic reach and, hence, it is, in a way, not an interesting truth for us. Such cases, then, seem to necessitate that we retain a concept of truth and knowledge suitable for our epistemic limitations and the world we can understand. Even though T_s is recognized as a sort of "object of desire" for our doxastic actions, it has little practical role in the actual epistemic practice.

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[27] Almeder 1992, p. 144.

Consider Goldman's example of the innocent man given in Section *6.1*. If there is no humanly possible way to find out that the accused person is actually innocent, we must submit it as a weak truth that he is guilty. To simplify the situation, suppose there are ten pieces of evidence related to this crime and that one of them is beyond the epistemic reach of the interested. In this case, it is a T_w that the accused is guilty. Moreover, that T_w is not identical to justified belief can be shown as follows: another agent might justifiably believe that the accused is innocent by relying upon the same set of available evidence but carrying out a radically different reasoning on that particular incident. Assume further that his reasoning is produced by a reliable cognitive mechanism but, still, that particular reasoning is somehow flawed. In this case, he is said to have a justified belief which accidentally hits on T_s but is nonetheless not K_w.

I do not claim that this account is as clear and satisfactory as one would ideally like it be. But I do think that it reflects a significant aspect of our actual epistemic actions and states. So I offer it as a tentative proposal which may facilitate our understanding of the different aspects of human knowledge. There are two important remarks to be made here. First, as I argued in Chapter Seven, a Davidsonian approach would have it that the set of our K_w's must have a lot in common with that of our K_s's. Second, it *is* most likely the case that our epistemic repertoire of veridical representation in general gets improved substantially as time goes by, especially on matters like astronomic phenomena. But I do not think this gives us good reasons for making TC a *universal condition* of propositional knowledge.

Finally, let me briefly suggest a way to solve our predicament regarding metaknowledge. If T_w and K_w are admitted to play a role in our actual epistemological endeavor in addition, *inter alia*, to T_s which I proclaimed to be an indispensable (normative) component of any ARist epistemology, metaknowledge may cease to be a problem for ordinary human cognizers. To reiterate, FA_{KK} claims that epistemic agents must, at least sometimes, be able to know (fallibilistically) that they know. I believe that this is the best idea available in the pertinent literature on metaknowledge; but it must, as I have suggested, be purged of certain realist and extensionalist elements to become a viable one and to serve the purposes of a general metaepistemic theory. This gives us the following. Incorporating T_w and K_w into the picture, we can unproblematically allow that an epistemic agent S can $know_w$ (the $truth_w$) that S $knows_w$ (the $truth_w$) that p, where p is an empirical proposition defined and employed within the cultural/linguistic

Framework of S. Since this metaknowledge is a fallibilistic one, there is nothing dubious or mysterious about the claim that S may succeed *or* fail to know$_w$ that she is in possession of the truth$_w$ in a particular case. To give an example, a scientist can know$_w$ that she knows$_w$ that there are only nine planets in our Solar system, although the truth$_s$ happens to be such that there is a tenth planet in the system which is totally beyond our current scientific and technological reach. According to the argument I have offered in this chapter, we cannot get this plain and commonsensical result without rejecting ER. The literature of contemporary analytic epistemology is dominated by the supposition that realism about metaknowledge and fallibilism do not contradict one another. I have tried to show in this chapter that for the majority of our ordinary empirical propositions (believed by ordinary non-omniscient human agents), this assumption is clearly mistaken.

In conclusion, realist interpretations of metaknowledge cannot easily make good sense of plain human knowledge. This, however, does *not* necessarily show that human knowledge is impossible; it merely shows that ER causes an epistemological disaster vis-à-vis the possibility of ordinary empirical knowledge. If nonepistemic truth is made a condition of empirical knowledge, human cognizers become "blind knowers," i.e., they cannot check out the satisfaction of the truth condition. The KK-thesis amounts, within the realist discourse, to the claim that a knower can check the satisfaction of the truth condition. However, if my argument above is correct, this is an impossibility for a typical empirical proposition. The assumption of the proponent of the realist KK-thesis is that we have independent checks on the separate conditions of propositional knowledge whereas in fact we have no checking on the truth condition of knowledge independently of the justification condition. If, on the other hand, one denies the thesis, then she seemingly has to affirm that we are epistemologically blind. Consequently, if human knowledge is not to become an empty notion, it should not be fettered with a realist conception of empirical knowledge. And the same goes for metaknowledge as well. This conclusion points in the direction of a non-ERist construal of the KK-thesis. Higher-level propositional knowledge, as well as the first level which aims cognitive or epistemic contact with the ARist truth, is humanly possible. But, according to my thesis, ER *cum* AR is capable of supplying or describing neither the basic nor meta levels of knowledge.[28]

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[28] This chapter has greatly benefited from the comments and criticisms of Bernard Linsky.

CHAPTER NINE

On Defeaters

9.1. The Fourth Condition

In the last two chapters, I have focused on the truth condition of the *tripartite* definition of knowledge and tried to highlight the epistemological connection between knowledge and (nonepistemic) truth. As I have pointed out in the first chapter, ever since Gettier clearly showed in 1963 that the unqualified "justified true belief" (*JTB*) fails to characterize propositional knowledge adequately, epistemologists have paid considerable effort to amend the definition by adding further conditions regarding the justificatory status of the believer. Since the present study is essentially about the issues concerning the actual human cognizers' alethic connection to reality, I have comfortably skirted—and will continue to do so—the intricacies of the whole epistemic program of improving the definition of knowledge by refining it on the evidential or justificatory side.[1] I do not think that epistemic justification is of secondary importance in a theory of knowledge; but I believe it is perfectly possible, and enormously useful, to produce accounts of our epistemic connection to the truth of our statements without addressing any of the central issues regarding justification. We may fail to obtain the broadest or most comprehensive epistemic picture possible via such an "aspectist" strategy, but I do not doubt that we can at least get a good understanding of a certain dimension of analytic epistemology. Let me also explicitly state that I take, as may have become clear thus far, the issues surrounding the truth condition of the definition of knowledge very seriously and, therefore, do not share the intuitions of those epistemologists who think that "the central topic of epistemology is epistemic justification. . . ."[2]

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[1] Still, I have arguably committed myself to a certain extent about epistemic justification since in my characterization weak knowledge is different from, but intimately related to, our justificatory tools—which is not the case with "strong" kind. Furthermore, I cannot see how my epistemic-alethic position can jibe happily with, for instance, a Goldmanian type of externalism where justification of a belief held by an agent is connected to the rightness of justification-rules. (Goldman 1986, Chapter 4) The concept of rightness is defined by Goldman in terms of *truth conduciveness*, and there is little doubt that what he has in mind in offering the pertinent account is nonepistemic truth. But I have claimed that any theory of epistemic justification hinging upon the concept of strong truth will be an inexpedient one when it comes to throwing light upon the issues surrounding justification of actual human agents.

Gettier teaches us the following: it may be the case that a true proposition *p* believed by *S* somehow acquires its *JTB* status from such "unintended" sources as another true proposition *q* which *S* does not evidentially associate with *p* in a particular instance of alleged justified true belief—hence invalidating *S*'s claim to knowledge of *p*.[3] During the post-Gettier period, one common response to the problem has been the suggestion that while the three basic conditions of the *JTB* analysis must be retained, the definition has to be supplemented by a fourth condition which is to render the evidential or justificatory support conferred on the proposition to be known by *S* to be a non-accidental one. This basically means blocking the satisfaction of the *J*-condition by those evidential items or considerations which were not initially among the reasons that *S* could give, or that could be given for *S*, in support of the proposition believed by her. In other words, the fourth condition is employed to secure the epistemic link between the to-be-justified proposition *p* and the evidence *S* actually holds for *p*.

In this chapter I will examine a well-elaborated and well-circulated form of the fourth-condition analysis in order to find out whether the improved definition pose a challenge to the sort of anti-ER I have defended. It has been suggested that the tripartite definition can be made tenable if we add an extra condition regulating the relation between the proposition *S* believes and *S*'s actual reasons for believing it. More specifically, the claim is that the epistemic justification for S's belief that *p* is said to be undefective if there is no defeating evidence, or simply "defeater," in connection with either *p* or the evidence that *S* has for *p*. J. Pollock calls the former kind a *rebutting defeater*, and the latter an *undercutting defeater*.[4] The literature on defeaters is fairly rich and convoluted, and I have no intention to survey and examine here the existent views. So my treatment of the notion of defeaters here will be a rather focused one.[5] I will use Pollock's formulation of the supplemented definition of propositional knowledge, which puts together nicely certain important ideas from the defeasibility tradition, and will try to explain why I find the fourth condition analyses of this sort objectionable and ultimately incapable of addressing the sort of anti-ERist concerns I have expressed.

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[2] Pollock 1986, p. 9.

[3] To explain this, consider one of Gettier's original examples (1963): Smith justifiably believes the false proposition *p*: "Jones owns a Ford" and infers from that proposition *q*: "Either Jones owns a Ford or Brown is in Barcelona." Since *q* is logically inferred from *p*, it seems also epistemically justified. As it turns out, Brown is really in Barcelona and, thus, *q* is true. But despite the fact that Smith believes in a justified true proposition, *q*, it is actually not an instance of knowledge. What makes *JTB* possible in this example is a fact beyond Smith's ken and, therefore, it is not an instance of knowledge.

9.2. Pollock and Ultimate Undefeasibility

In the original Gettier examples, *S* fails to know *p* because, despite the fact that *p* is an instance of *JTB* for *S*, there happens to be a true proposition which makes S's belief that *p* true—even though it plays no role in *S*'s reasoning in arriving at that belief. To remedy this situation, we can put forward an extra condition as follows:[6]

> There is no true proposition *q* such that if *q* were added to S's beliefs the she would no longer be justified in believing *p*.

This suggestion will not quite do because although *q* may indeed be a defeater for *p*, there may be another proposition, *r*, which defeats *q*, thus acting as a *restoring defeater*. In that case, we say that *S* actually knows that *p* despite the presence of a defeater which would destroy *S*'s epistemic justification if she were aware of it. Suppose we amend the condition this time in the following way:[7]

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[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 38-39.

[5] One seminal work on this subject is Lehrer and Paxon's 1969 article "Knowledge: Undefeated Justified True Belief." R. Chisholm (1989) also made significant contributions to the discussion. See also Cohen (1987), Klein (1996a), Klein (1996b), Levy (1996), and Shope (1983),

[6] Pollock 1986, p. 181.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 182.

> If there is a true proposition *q* such that if *q* were added to *S*'s beliefs then she would no longer be justified in believing *p*, then there is also a true proposition *r* such that if *q* and *r* were both added to *S*'s beliefs then he would be justified in believing *p*.

This is an obvious improvement upon the previous definition in that it allows the existence of "harmless defeaters." In other words, the definition makes possible the neutralization of any defeater *q* (related to the original proposition *p*) by a proposition *r* which acts as a defeater defeater. But the problem with this new proposal, as Pollock notes, is that the introduction of *r* and *q* into S's belief system may have the effect of adding new reasons for believing that *p* rather than restoring S's old reasons. In short, it proves a difficult task to deal with the defeater defeaters by making progressively finer, and arguably *ad hoc*, adjustments in the characterization of the fourth condition.

Pollock responds to this difficulty by defining the notion of an "ultimately undefeated argument" and placing it at the center of his account of epistemic justification. The idea is briefly as follows:

> every argument proceeding from basic [i.e., non-inferential] states that *S* is actually in will be *undefeated at level 0* for *S*. . . . In general, we define an argument to be *undefeated at level n+1* if and only if it is undefeated at level 0 and is not defeated by any arguments undefeated at level *n*. An argument is *ultimately undefeated* if and only if there is some point beyond which it remains permanently undefeated; that is for some *N*, the argument remains undefeated at level n for every $n > N$.[8]

To put it differently, Pollock urges us to consider an ultimate situation where (given an agent *S*, a proposition *p* she justifiably believes, an argument *A* she has for *p*, and the set of all defeaters in relation to *p*, including the restoring ones) the defeaters for *A* balance and neutralize one another, leaving S's initial reasons for believing in *p* intact. Next, Pollock defines *objective epistemic justification* which he places somewhere between the concept of subjective justification and knowledge:

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[8] *Ibid.*, p. 189.

> *S* is objectively justified in believing *p* if and only if *S* instantiates some argument *A* supporting *p* which is ultimately undefeated relative to the set of all truths.[9]

Propositional knowledge differs from objectively justified belief in that the former necessitates, in addition to the latter, that *S* be cognizant of, and be sensitive to, socially recognized facts and situations. I think what Pollock has in mind here can be explained with the following example. Suppose *S* is a successful journalist and it is professionally expected from an employee in her position to start the day by checking a particular web site which provides reliable information for journalists like *S*—call this "Method$_1$". One morning *S* skips Method$_1$ and instead follows the unusual method of calling a fellow journalist to obtain some specific information (Method$_2$). With the information *S* receives, she forms an argument *A* and eventually a true belief *q* as the conclusion of *A*. Since the past experience of *S* strongly suggests that Method$_2$ is a sufficiently reliable one, *S* is (subjectively) justified in believing that *q*. Yet, unbeknownst to *S*, *q* comes with numerous undercutting defeaters. It fortunately turns out that all of those defeaters somehow get neutralized by restoring ones, thus making *S*'s argument for *q* ultimately undefeated. The important fact in this scenario is that *S* would have been aware of most of those undercutting defeaters if he used the well-established Method$_1$. Consequently, even if the defeaters in this situation have no ultimate epistemic effect on *S*'s belief in the true proposition *p*, we intuitively feel, Pollock thinks, that *S* does not know that p—despite the fact that she is objectively justified.

I tend to think that Pollock's social requirement on propositional knowledge raises the question of how independent it is from the requirement concerning regular (or non-social) undefeasibility, but I will not discuss this issue here. Pollock finalizes his discussion by offering the following definition of propositional knowledge:

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[9] *Ibid.*, p. 185.

> *S* knows *p* if and only if *S* instantiates some argument *A* supporting *p* which is (1) ultimately undefeated relative to the set of all truths, and (2) ultimately undefeated relative to the set of all truths socially sensitive for *S*.[10]

Pollock's definition seems to avoid the problems posed by the Gettier-like counter-examples one can find in the literature. This sounds like a significant result given the fact that continued failure of the defeasibility analyses especially in the 70's had caused some philosophers to give up all the hope.[11] The apparent advantage of Pollock's account is that it capitalizes on the notion of *ultimate* undefeasibility, thus avoiding some important difficulties encountered by those accounts due to the existence of defeated defeaters. I will nonetheless argue that the problems related to the *externalist* epistemic element, which I have associated with TC in the preceding two chapters, are fatal also to the viability of the fourth-condition analyses of this sort. The problem I perceive here is not just that the art of examples and counter-examples related to the undefeasibility condition has progressively moved the epistemologists from an adequate understanding of the actual practice or state of epistemic justification, but that it now seems very difficult to successfully provide such a fourth condition at the appropriate dosage: either that condition is weak and uninteresting (and thus can be ultimately incorporated into the justification condition) or it is too strong and ideal (in that it repeats the role of the realist truth condition).

9.3. Against Externalism

Let us take a closer look at the condition about ultimate undefeasibility of a believer's argument for a given proposition. This condition (call it "UC") is intended to guarantee that the evidence an epistemic agent (*S*) possesses for a true proposition (*p*) that she believes is ultimately undefeated by other facts. In Pollock's formulation, *S* knows *p* only if *S* instantiates some argument *A* supporting *p* which is ultimately undefeated relative to *the set of all truths*. This rather strong demand raises, I think, an important question about the exact nature of UC. Can we imagine an instance of *S*'s alleged knowledge that *p* where UC gets satisfied but the truth condition does not? This seems rather unlikely. Suppose we are told that *S* justifiably believes in a proposition *q* and that *S*'s argument for *q* is ultimately undefeated relative to the set of all truths. We also assume, in this hypothetical example, that we are not imparted any information about *q*'s truth value. Under these circumstances, it is inconceivable, I think, that *q* turns out to be a false proposition. Notice that UC requires not just that *q* remain ultimately undefeated relative to those truths epistemically accessible for *S* or any other agent, but also that it remains so with respect to all truths regardless of their accessibility to normal cognizers. One obvious implication of this externalist requirement is that the reliability of the evidence *S* has for *q* is protected *sub specie aeternitatis*, viz., from the standpoint of the set of all truths rather than from the perspective of a finite epistemic agent. But, if this is so, how can this situation be made compatible with the possibility of *q*'s being false?

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[10] *Ibid.*, p. 193.

[11] In his 1983 book *The Analysis of Knowing: A Decade of Research*, R. K. Shope, after providing a comprehensive and critical examination of the post-Gettier efforts to produce a tenable analysis of defeasibility, solemnly concluded his discussion by saying:

> Perhaps the failure of so many analyses provides good reason to suppose that the defeasibility approach to the analysis of knowledge is itself destined to be defeated beyond restoration. (p. 74)

This last point can also be made by way of a *reductio* as follows. Let us suppose that *q* is a false proposition *and* that UC is satisfied for *q* which is a belief held by *S* at time *t*. Take *q* as the proposition "There are eight planets in the Solar system," *S* an epistemic agent who justifiably believes in *q*, and *t* the year 1920—that is, ten years before the discovery of Pluto by Clyde Tombaugh. In this case, contrary to our initial assumption, UC cannot be satisfied for *S* because there must, intuitively speaking, be a piece of evidence, i.e., some hidden truth, *out there* undermining *S*'s argument leading to the false belief *q*.[12] This strongly suggests that if *q* is a false proposition, UC cannot possibly be satisfied in reality. Now consider another hypothetical case where *r* is true but UC is not satisfied for *r*. Take *r* as "There are nine planets in the Solar system." Can *S*'s argument for *r*, assuming that *r* is AR-ly true, be somehow ultimately defeated relative to the set of all truths? I do not think that this question cannot intelligibly be answered in the affirmative. Of course, the present argument I have developed can be countered by saying that there may be isolated events in reality which are not related, in evidential terms, to any other occurrence at all—hence falsifying the thesis that ultimate undefeasibility of *p* by all truths is equivalent to truth of *p*. This would indeed constitute a genuine counter-example to my claim that satisfaction of UC cannot be conceived independently of that of TC; but I seriously doubt that there are any such natural events within our current epistemic and/or scientific reach. In short, as far as the world which we live in (and understand) is concerned, it seems like a general rule that if there is no fact to defeat a proposition *p*, then *p* is true, and *vice versa*.

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[12] In the case of Pluto, the discovery was due to astronomers' comparing the observed positions of the two planets, Uranus and Neptune, with positions predicted from their orbits about the Sun. Small departures from the predicted positions indicated that the paths of these two planets were being disturbed by the gravitational pull of another body. For the purposes of my example here, these departures constitute one "missing truth" (or defeater) in relation with the false belief "There are eight planets in the Solar system."

The above discussion suggests that UC has actually an ambiguous role in the definition of propositional knowledge. Although it is originally intended to rectify *S*'s defective justification, it appears to do far more than that epistemologically. It is not just that both UC and TC are externalist or non-operational conditions; more crucially, their satisfaction are seemingly concomitant circumstances.[13] But I think the problem with such definitions as the one proposed by Pollock goes deeper than this. I am inclined to think, in the light of my linguistic Kantian understanding of the concept of propositional truth, that the phrase "the set of all truths" in his definition of knowledge deprives that definition of its epistemic usefulness. To see this, consider the following example. Suppose a human agent, call him Socrates, is watching a particular rock somewhere at the outskirts of Athens in the year 450 B.C. During his perception of the rock, the proximal stimulus given to Socrates's cognitive system causes him to get the sensation of color violet. Consequently, Socrates forms the belief *p*: "The rock looks violet to me now," and derives from it another one, *q*: "The rock is violet." Let us call this argument *A*.

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[13] The common problem about a fully externalist condition is, of course, that one can always legitimately ask the question "how could we show that the condition is satisfied in any case?". (Almeder 1992, p. 63)

Suppose further that there is a natural anomaly involved in this instance of belief formation: an unusual electromagnetic phenomenon affects the area around the rock, causing the light waves reflected from the objects in the area to alter their wavelength. Thus, although the physical fact is that the rock emits light waves of length 630 nanometer (red), they get transformed to waves whose length is 430 nanometer (violet) before they reach Socrates's eyes. I will assume, for the sake of this example, that we can accept physicalism about the nature of color and its perception. Then, it is the case that Socrates perceives a red rock as violet. Moreover, his argument A which proceeds from p to q is ultimately defeated by the true statement d: "In this particular area which is being affected by a natural electromagnetic phenomenon, all objects looking violet to normal human eye are actually red." Hence, Socrates's argument A (which supports q) is said to be defeated by d.

This scenario is not meant, properly speaking, to be a counter-example to Pollock's definition. After all, the belief being considered here, q, is a false one from a strictly realist point of view. Rather, my point is that if an absolutely externalist condition like UC is incorporated into the definition of ordinary knowledge, we get the implausible consequence that *any* true proposition, irrespective of the linguistic, cultural, or scientific framework within which it has been produced, is *ipso facto* licensed, almost ontologically, to act as a potential defeater vis-à-vis an agent's justified belief. It now seems that we have come across the same problem that bothered us in our discussion of the truth condition of propositional knowledge. The unacceptable result of Pollock's definition given above is that although Socrates seems to $know_W$ the "false" proposition that q, his argument for q is defeated by a member of "the set of all truths" which is imagined to exist, from an analytic (and ontological) viewpoint, independently of the epistemic and cognitive limits of human agents like Socrates and his contemporaries. But it is extremely implausible to hold that Socrates's argument A for his "false" belief that q is defective merely because it is not informed and corrected by a piece of truth that could have been spelled out and brought to bear by means of the epistemic-scientific tools of those agents who would live about 2500 years after him. This brings us back to a pivotal point emphasized in the previous chapter: there must be a place for weak knowledge in an epistemological account of humans' cognitive interaction with the world if our aim is to give a convincing epistemic picture of an ordinary (actual) human agent as opposed to an abstract and unconstrained '*S*'. Regarding our example, one can easily imagine that human beings might never have produced a theory of electromagnetic phenomena. And if we lived in *such* a world, what the externalist takes as a "fact" defeating Socrates's argument *A* would certainly *not* be making any contribution to that grand set of truths. Therefore, it must be admitted that the set Pollock envisages can only be the set of all truths that can be formed, shaped, and discovered within *some* conceptual Framework made by actual human beings—including, e.g., the perceptual and theoretical truths.

In light of this discussion, let me distinguish two problems that threaten the credibility of Pollock's account. First, it makes little sense to talk about the set of all truths defeating particular knowledge claims because truths are formed, according to my understanding of AR, within human-made Frameworks, not in reality itself. Second, *even against the background of a certain Framework*, if UC employs the notion of the set of all truths in an externalist fashion, then UC serves no epistemic-semantic purpose as distinct from that of TC. I have argued that the latter of these problems is fatal to Pollock's entire project. But it seems, from a broader semantic perspective, that the first one poses a more fundamental problem because Pollock's account is theoretically unequipped to deal with our ordinary (framework-based) truths as opposed to the analytic philosopher's good old "truth *simpliciter*" which is incontrovertibly a bankrupt concept.

9.4. Concluding Remarks and a Tentative Proposal

A defender of the fourth condition analyses can respond to this argument by saying that UC need not be as "external" and "strong" as TC. Such a softened account would surely not look like Pollock's present account; but it is a possible externalist theory that can manage to avoid the difficulties of a purely externalist approach. The question in that case, however, would be how such a reasonably internalized fourth condition could provide us with a requirement that cannot be accommodated within the conceptual borders of the justificatory condition. If we replace "the set of all truths" in Pollock's definition with "the set of all truths available to *S*" (internalism) or with "the set of all truths available to *S*'s linguistic community" (narrow externalism), we might arguably save that definition. Still, in that case we would be allotting a rather different epistemic function to UC and would be using that condition to regulate and secure the justificatory status of an argument that a *S* has for a given proposition *p* he allegedly knows, *not* as an externalist epistemic device. Then, it would remain to be explained whether and how UC functions as a necessary condition that is independent of the justification condition of knowledge.

I will make a tentative attempt to turn Pollock's problematic definition into a more cogent one by taking the advantage of the terminology and explanatory devices I have developed in his study. This can be accomplished by adopting the kind of linguistic Kantianism I favor and by utilizing the concepts of "weak" truth and knowledge described above. Consider the following variation on Pollock's definition:

> *S* knows$_w$ that *p* if and only if *S* instantiates some argument *A* supporting *p* within a conceptual framework *F* such that *p* is (1) ultimately undefeated relative to the set of all beliefs which are both available and cognitively accessible to *S* within the doxastic system of *S*, and (2) ultimately undefeated relative to the set of all truths$_w$ which are actually available to the agents who share and employ *F*.

This definition can avoid, I think, the difficulties of an externalist approach in several ways. First, it gives up the whole discourse on the realist epistemic conditions whose satisfaction cannot be checked out by finite cognizers. Second, it relativizes defeasibility not to the set of all truths, but only to those that can be framed within *S*'s conceptual scheme. Third, it secures the justificatory condition both subjectively (or internalistically) and inter-subjectively (or externalistically) by means of the conditions (1) and (2). Of course, we need to work out certain important details with regard to such a definition (for example, the specification of the conditions under which a true$_w$ proposition is said to be *available*, to a reasonable degree, to the members of the linguistic community that employs *F*, and so on). I will leave the definition at an intuitive level without further elaboration, hoping that it is essentially on the right track and that it reflects how a coherent and defensible characterization of propositional knowledge can be manufactured out of the alethic-epistemic view offered in the preceding chapters. My general conclusion for this chapter is that the externalist versions of the fourth condition analyses do not seem to pose a serious threat to my epistemic perspective. Moreover, I contend that my account can be used to transform a well-elaborated version of such externalism, viz., Pollock's account of ultimate undefeasibility, into a tenable anti-ERist definition of knowledge which, I believe, accords well with our strongest intuitions about propositional truth and propositional knowledge.

CHAPTER TEN

Conclusion

10.1. Why Alethic Actualism?

We can pinpoint several important theoretical desiderata within the contemporary epistemology literature. A prominent, perpetual, and highly controversial desideratum, which has a history almost as long as the field itself, involves the development of a theory explicating or regulating the nature of the *alethic* connections which human beings ordinarily establish with the world they live in. Those who are sympathetic to the idea of pursuing this task affirm the contention that, despite the presence of certain noteworthy efforts to undermine—or sometimes even to obliterate—it, the concept of propositional truth is yet the most essential and interesting subject matter to be studied in this field. Another desideratum can be expressed in connection with a relatively recent question and concern: how realistic and useful are our epistemic criteria of adequacy in general, given the fact that the a priori prescriptions of analytic philosophers often fail to enlighten or relate to the epistemic actions, states, and limitations of the *actual* human beings? In that context, the project of naturalizing epistemology is acknowledged to be a major step toward a new understanding of human agents and their epistemic success. There is little doubt that a viable theory of knowledge must be informed by certain pragmatic or empirical considerations. It is not sufficiently clear, however, where this leaves us exactly with respect to the alleged normativity of a concept like propositional truth. Is truth, as Davidson says, "not a norm in addition to justification"?[1]

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[1] Davidson 1999, p. 18.

These two issues or desiderata have formed the main axes and motivating force of the present study. I regard my *Alethic Actualism* essentially as a quasi-realist philosophical account of the epistemic connection of finite, non-omniscient cognizers with the truth values of their empirical truth-bearers. This account comprises three dimensions. Ontologically, it recognizes noumenal entities and states of affairs while denying that they are the makers of our propositional truths. Alethically, it holds not only that truth is generally independent of the epistemic, evidential, or justificatory means available to human agents but also that the truth conditions of our statements (and the truth-making relations) can only be understood within the actual linguistic/conceptual schemes or Frameworks. Finally, from an epistemic perspective, Alethic Actualism denies that nonepistemic truth can unproblematically be made a panepistemic necessary condition of propositional knowledge. The "actualist" aspect constitutes the crux of this account in that, according to my argument hitherto, its rivals (viz., TR, Putnam's internalist ontology, anti-AR, Davidson's minimalist semantics, and traditional ER) suffer mostly in terms of explicating and illuminating the world of an *actual epistemic agent*—as opposed to, for example, the Davidsonian interpreter, Putnamian free-floating subject unconstrained by a noumenal anchor, or the analytic epistemologists' favorite person, i.e., *S* of the tripartite or tetrapartite definition of knowledge.

In this last chapter, I will try to clarify certain points regarding my account and also respond to several potential objections that might be raised against it.

10.2. Definitions and Explications

In Chapter Eight I have discussed Kirkham's distinction between, roughly, the extensional and intensional aspects of the task of defining truth and noted his misgivings over the prospects of a purely extensional definition. Kirkham's scheme of categorization is actually a remarkably rigorous one, and it maybe worthwhile to take a closer look at the division he offers. According to Kirkham, the extensional project, neatly exemplified by Tarski's semantic theory of truth, aims at giving the denotation or individually necessary and jointly sufficient conditions for a truth-bearer's being true. This project is distinguished from the *essence project* in that the latter conceives the extensional equivalence as a necessary one—i.e., holding in all possible worlds.[2] To explain this: my having a heart and my having a blood-pumping organ are extensionally equivalent, but not just accidentally so. Consequently, in such a case, we have an equivalence which is stronger than material equivalence:[3]

Necessarily (I have a heart $\equiv$ I possess a blood-pumping organ)

This can be contrasted with a case of plain material equivalence where, e.g., the right hand side of the equivalence reads: "I have a liver." The latter differs from the essential equivalence in that I can easily envisage a possible world in which I have a heart but not a liver.

Kirkham maintains that both the extensional and essence projects are *metaphysical* ones for they attempt "to identify what truth consists in, what it is for a statement (or belief or proposition, etc.) to be true."[4] The *assertion project*, on the other hand, relates to the informative content of the term 'is true'. This project hinges on the notion of intensional equivalence. It is principally concerned with providing *synonymies* and with what we actually mean when we say that something is true.[5] Let us remember that, traditionally speaking, "a predicate is said to *connote* those *properties* which a thing must have in order for the predicate to be applicable to it."[6] The predicate 'bachelor' applies to those people who have the property of "unmarried male" as we ordinarily understand the term and use it in everyday discourse. As far as the assertion project is concerned, then, we are within the borders of ordinary language, dealing with "what is in people's heads."[7]

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[2] Kirkham (1992, p. 37) contends that the essence project has been carried out not only by the correspondence theorists like Russell and Austin, but also by some coherentists (e.g., Blanshard), pragmatists (e.g., Peirce), and minimalists (e.g., Horwich).

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 10.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 20.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 19.

[6] Pap 1958, p. 424, my italics.

There is yet a different sort of project that Kirkham fails to mention, one which is not restricted to the business of providing exact synonymies for 'is true' and, at the same time differs from the search for the material equivalents of this term. This is the project of *explicating* or *elucidating* the meaning of the term in question. As far as a project of this sort is concerned, the main goal is to transform, in Carnapian terminology, an inexact concept (explicandum) to a relatively clarified and explicated one (explicatum). Although the point of departure in such a project is our ordinary, inexact concepts, the pertinent explications are by no means restricted to an accurate reflection of "what is in people's heads." While this fact separates the explication project from the assertion project (of finding pre-existing synonymies), the former is also notably different from the essence project in that the conditions of adequacy for an explication are predominantly *pragmatic*—whereas the conditions of adequacy for, e.g., the definition of water as H_2O are chiefly *empirical* and *theoretical*. (And, it may be added, for scientific realists about natural kinds these two types of conditions are not necessarily the same.)[8]

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[7] As a result, the assertion project differs significantly from the essence project. This can be seen by considering Putnam's famous "Twin Earth" argument (1986, pp. 18-25) which is intended to show that the meanings of at least some of our words depend on how things stand outside our heads. The challenge posed by the (anti-descriptivist) Kripke-Putnam argument against the Frege-Russell view finds its expression in the contention that our natural kind terms are not equivalent to a set of descriptions. Rather, what corresponds to a term like 'gold' has an objective nature determined by causal relations in the mind-independent reality, and the identity of such natural kinds must be discovered by empirical science. (Both Kripke and Putnam would say that water does have an *essence*.)

[8] It is worth noting in this context that Putnam's position which is articulated exclusively in relation to the natural kind terms is arguably not very suitable or helpful for the purposes of characterizing or defining metaphysical/semantic terms like 'truth'. Given that the truth of a proposition is not clearly a natural property, an inquiry into the "essence" of truth might have a fairly different character from that aiming at the "essence" of gold or water. More clearly, it may reasonably be argued that the adequacy conditions of explication for 'is true' are actually not given empirically and, hence, the essence project as described by Kirkham must involve ineliminable a prioristic elements. Thus, Alston (1996, pp. 37-38) writes:

> It is familiar point nowadays, thanks to the work of Putnam and Kripke, that a property (or a kind) may have features, may have a constitution, that is not reflected in our concept that picks out that property. What heat really *is* is mean kinetic energy, though our (ordinary) concept of heat is not in those terms at all. . . In the same way, the

In this study, our two major explicanda have been about the concepts of propositional truth and propositional knowledge. As for the pertinent explicata, I have offered a version of alethic realism based upon a certain view of scheme-based semantics and a "mitigated" anti-ER, respectively. These explicata are elucidatory in that they can, I maintain, throw light upon the semantic-epistemic reality of actual human cognizers better than its rivals—e.g., pragmatism or Tractarian realism about the nature of truth and ER about the nature of our epistemic contact with propositional truths. The explicata we have obtained in the preceding chapters relate, *inter alia*, to the meaning of the terms 'true' and 'knowledge' as we commonly use them *in ordinary discourse*. They also reveal that we may have certain misconceptions about the nature our epistemic and semantic concepts. Therefore, what is being achieved in the production of those explicata through some philosophical scrutiny is an evaluation of our general and common understanding of the terms 'truth' and 'knowledge' and rendering, on the basis of such critical examination, a more penetrating, accurate, and tenable formulation of these terms. The underlying theme here is that we may not, contrary to the appearance, always have an adequate grasp of the epistemic, semantic, and alethic implications of such terms despite the fact that we generally employ them in an unproblematic manner. Consequently, my explicatory attempt in this study straddles two customary projects: one that unapologetically focuses on the ordinary usage of terms like 'true' and 'knowledge' and another that turns a critical eye on such usage. The result is a "revisionary" philosophical activity which not only strives to attain certain theoretical goals (e.g., coherence) but is also motivated by such pragmatic concerns as being able to adequately describe the epistemic and alethic practice of the actual agents.

> *property* of truth may have various features that are not reflected in our *concept* of truth. In terms of this distinction, my realist account of truth is an account of our ordinary concept of truth. . . But the property of statements, etc., thus identified and delimited may have features that go beyond our conceptual access to it. In particular, it may have the features embodied in the correspondence theory, features on which the aspect embodied in our concept supervenes. . . .

(My thanks to Bruce Hunter for providing certain clarifications for my present discussion.)

I have argued in Chapter Three that Armstrong's account of the relation of metaphysical truth-making fails to enlighten *our concept of propositional truth*. While this idea seems intuitively acceptable, the italicized expression in the previous sentence stands in need of significant amount of explication and clarification. Consider the following: what do we normally take the extension of the term 'know' to be—in terms of the "weak" and "strong" distinction I have introduced—when we say "I *know* that p is *true*"? I am inclined to think that when the speakers of English language utter this sentence they, for the majority of the cases, hardly have K_w in their mind. As Almeder puts it, "although there are two senses of 'knows', the strong sense clearly dominates in the mind of the native speaker."[9] Propositional knowledge, in our non-philosophical moments, is ordinarily tantamount to "getting things right as they are in reality." But if my anti-ERist argument is right, we must make theoretical room for possible, presumably even occasional, discrepancies between what we strongly know and what we think we strongly know, particularly when it seems humanly impossible to distinguish one from another. One merit of the explicatum I have offered for knowledge may be that it draws our attention to what we are actually doing epistemologically (except by accident) when we on considered reflection apply the term 'know'.

Since the extensional project is, generally speaking, about what makes our propositions true, one may reasonably ask if it specifically deals with T_s, i.e., the *real*, as opposed to merely epistemically accessible or alleged, truth conditions of our world of Situations. Such may be a defensible position, but I have a broader concept in mind. Consider the crater example given in Section *8.4*. It was about a hypothetical case where T_s (viz., "The number of craters on the surface of D is N+1") turned to be beyond our epistemic reach. I have insisted that what is epistemically and cognitively presented (or available) to human agents in this instance is only weak truth, and the related epistemic state is weak knowledge. This can be contrasted with a more common case where weak truth happens also to be strong truth, and the two are in fact coextensional. This gives us a reason to think, on the basis of the claim that weak truth and knowledge ought to be taken with philosophical seriousness, that the extensional project perhaps encompasses the makers of *both* strong *and* weak truths. The extension of the term T_s is the AR-ly truths whereas that of T_w is the *presumed* AR-ly truths which *may or may not* turn out to be the former sort. Of course, our weak truths are also strong truths in those cases where we hit on a T_s; and, given certain Davidsonian considerations, this must be the case for most of our truth claims. In a similar vein, the extension of the term 'strong knowledge' is nothing less than veridical factual representation.[10] The extension of K_w, on the other hand, is the agents' epistemic connection with the *presumed* truth or truth-maker which *may or may not* turn out to be veridical one—and this uncertainty is because of our inability to tell the difference between the two. Therefore, in the veridical cases, weak and strong knowledge are coextensional.

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[9] Almeder 1992, p. 37.

It may be asked at this point how strong knowledge can ever have any extension at all if it requires direct and veridical access to strong truth which can be established only from God's eye point of view, that is, non-evidentially. The answer to this question can be found in a distinction I have drawn in Chapter Eight. According to my account, the root of the epistemological problem lies not in our hitting or missing the AR-ly truth *per se*, but in our inability to know that we are having some veridical epistemic access to the satisfaction of the realist truth conditions of our truth-bearers. In those cases where the principle of bivalence holds, our particular truth-value attributions either succeed or fail to reflect what is going on in the external reality. When they succeed, it is an instance of both K_s and K_w though the former is arguably an epistemic achievement which can be recognized and appreciated only by an omniscient agent, not by finite cognizers. Strong knowledge does have its instances because, first, it is conditional upon T_s which definitely has extensional instances (as provided by AR) and, second, whenever our K_w satisfies both T_w *and* T_s, it is said to constitute, *unbeknownst to us*, an instance of strong knowledge as well. This sort of epistemic feat has little pragmatic function or use for finite cognitive agents who are unable to check out the satisfaction of the nonepistemic truth conditions of their statements, but it gratuitously takes place in the "epistemological realm" anyway.

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[10] The term 'representation' here being understood as "object" rather than act.

This may seem like an odd notion of extension, but I am willing to endorse it as a meaningful and useful characterization in light of my arguments thus far. Of course, from a *purely ontological* point of view, the extension of our (realist) 'truth' is the set of all AR-ly truths whether they are epistemically accessible for us or not. But from a more *operational* or *agency* standpoint, it makes sense to envisage the extension of 'truth' or 'knowledge' in terms of the appearances or experiences we have in our exchange with the environment. Therefore, the first (principal, semantic) sense of the concept of extension is reasonably an objective one articulated *sub specie aeternitatis*. The second(ary) sense, on the other hand, is delineated from the knower's point of view, and it prioritizes the circumstances or Situations she encounters in her epistemic attempts. I am not claiming here, for example, that strong knowledge boils down to a weaker sort from that viewpoint. Rather, I contend, the fact that in the strong (AR-ly) instances of human knowledge we happen to get a happy overlap between weak and strong kinds presents us with an unsuspected predicament: *such* overlap, when it happens, is in general *not* transparently given to non-omniscient epistemic agents. Since we always have to stand on the subject side of the alethic picture, the extension of the terms 'true' and 'knowledge' are typically presented to our cognition in a mediated fashion. Seen from the subject's perspective, all truths are inevitably weak truths and all knowledge is weak knowledge—hence the weak nature of the pertinent extensions. But we aim at more than that: we want as greater overlap between the extensions of T_w and T_s as possible. The extent to which we accomplish this, however, is one thing we will never be able to establish by our finite epistemic means.

10.3. The Idea of Nonepistemic Truth-Making

According to Goldman, we can hold on to the idea of supervenience in truth-making as far as the subvenient basis is understood as consisting of phenomenal truthmakers. This anti-TRist idea, which also underlies the sort of linguistic Kantianism I have defended, stands in sharp contrast with Armstrong's theory of truth-making.[11] The phenomenal truthmakers are found in the worldly Situations which determine not only the observational truths but all other kinds as well. One significant moral of our discussion of the truthmakers and truth-making relation is that it can be very misleading to focus our attention exclusively on such observational statements as "Snow is white." What is needed is a *general* theory of truth-makers which is capable of explicating various propositional truths while remaining cognizant of the theoretical difficulties of such an ambitious program. Let me stress, however, once again that the linguistic Kantian thesis that our phenomenal truth-makers (or the truth conditions of our statements) are determined within conceptual schemes does not mean that reality is a product of our powers of conceptualization. Once I heard from a philosophy student that 20/20, i.e., vision of normal acuity, is actually a social construction and that the use of this concept is not independent, from a Foucaultian perspective, of the normalization processes found in the modern Western societies. In addition to the fact that Michel Foucault never advocated such a preposterous idea, there is a simple response to this sort of anti-MR: it is *not* a social construction that people with poor vision, unaided with lens or glasses, will bump into walls and lampposts more often than the twenty/twenty people. As Sosa eloquently puts it, "from the fundamentally and ineliminably perspectival character of our thought it does not follow that reality itself is fundamentally perspectival."[12] This, of course, does *not* mean that there is *a single*

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[11] In Chapters Two and Three I have defended the view that it is a mistake to think that the phenomenal world will emerge ontologically out of the noumenal entities. The idea of obtaining truth out of some ontological supervenience seems to me tantamount to, in David Lewis's words, dreaming of "paradise on the cheap," hoping that we can obtain the "second-class" world and propositional truths *as a free lunch*. (Lewis 1987, pp. 140-141) My thanks to Bernard Linsky for bringing this point to my attention.

[12] Sosa 1993, p. 608.

world of states of affairs existing independently of our ways of conceptualization. Let me then state the gist of Alethic Actualism I have formulated and defended here: there is no reason to suppose that metaphysical realism, pluralism with respect to our truthmakers, and nonepistemic truth cannot coherently go hand in hand.[13]

Any account of phenomenal truth-making which refuses to jettison the idea of nonepistemic truth must face the question of what justifies the application of AR—which is typically formulated for such observational statements like "Snow is white"—to normative or evaluative facts. I take this as a serious issue and have tried in Chapter Six to show that my *Discovery Criterion* applies, with certain refinements, to such cases as well. The main idea here is that even in the ethical and aesthetic judgments, there is an important element of discovery, given the existing norms of a linguistic community. For example, an agent *S* may be regarded as malevolent by people around him because of his grumpy attitude, occasional misanthropic remarks, and anti-social manners. It may then be the case that not even a single member of that community identifies him as a good person. If consensus or widespread agreement is sufficient to make a moral judgment true, then *S* is indeed a morally contemptible person, and the ARist argument seemingly loses its strength when it comes to normative matters. Suppose, however, that *S* is actually a very sensitive and benevolent person who spends all his money for the needy. But *S* also hates public displays and, thus, does all those good deeds in a strictly anonymous fashion. Then, *S* must be seen as a morally praiseworthy person and the common opinion about him is definitely mistaken. My conclusion is that there is no sound basis for the claim that DC of alethic realism cannot apply to our evaluative judgments. It is typically the "world," not intersubjective agreement or justified beliefs, which determines the moral quality of *S*. (Interestingly, the idea of establishing the real truth values of singular moral judgments purely by deliberate communal agreement, or via predominantly "subjective" factors, seems objectionable from an ethical point of view too.) I therefore conclude that generally our "veridical" access to the truth value of a statement—be it normative or observational—largely involves acts or attempts of *discovery* rather than, say, agreement upon a belief.[14]

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[13] Lynch's theory is akin to mine on the metaphysical-alethic side, but not with respect to the epistemic role of truth. See, e.g., his (1998, pp. 106-107).

10.4. Why Retain the Realist Truth?

Let me broaden this point to respond to an important potential objection to my account: that it is a moot point to say that T_s must be retained as an ultimate epistemic goal even though it is not a universal condition of our knowledge attempts. The natural question is, then, why not get rid of such a notion of truth altogether? My answer is, as I have hinted above, that there exist good *philosophical* reasons to retain the realist notion of truth and also that it might make some real *practical* difference to embrace or renounce such a concept. Remember the example Goldman gives about the "really innocent man."[15] I assert that there would most likely be certain practical differences between a community the members of which are convinced that there is no sense of truth other than what is agreed upon by them at any given time and another community whose members tend to believe that propositional truth is something independent of their best evidence: the former would sentence Goldman's really innocent man to death whereas the latter would, I suppose, be very hesitant about it. My point is that recognition of such a truth independent of our epistemic means might have a valuable meta-epistemic and normative function or use in our actions *despite the fact that* at a basic epistemic level it admittedly has no use. Moreover, as I have discussed above, it seems to me highly counter-intuitive to contend that a singular empirical proposition has no "real" truth-value (T_s) other than what is suggested by our best evidence (T_w). And I cannot actually see why our inability to "use" such a notion in our epistemic actions should entail our getting rid of it altogether. We should also not lose sight of the fact that without epistemic truth anti-realism is seemingly bound to encounter certain serious problems, as repeatedly pointed out by the realist philosophers.

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[14] As I explained in Chapter 6, this does not mean that the truth-making relation is invariable across different sorts of judgments or propositions.

[15] See also Allen 1995, p. 164.

B. Allen has offered an interesting account of the above-described two senses of propositional truth. He contends that "passing for true" (or truth by agreement, intersubjective truth) does not make a proposition true.[16] Still, he argues, this is the only sort of truth we must be interested in. One principal reason for this, as he correctly notes, is that there is no *pragmatic* difference between "passing for true" and "true."[17] But there are certain problems about the account Allen offers. First, in addition to the above-mentioned claim about the absence of a "pragmatic" difference, he also makes the claim that "there is no impressive *philosophical* difference between what passes for true and what really is true."[18] I tend to think that these two claims are not equivalent and that the latter is not, for reasons given above, a cogent one. I have argued that there *is* a philosophical, though not a pragmatic/epistemic, difference between T_w and T_s. Second, Allen strongly rejects the idea that truths are "made" by virtue of something corresponding to them; rather, he says, "they are made to circulate." But, then, it becomes difficult to follow his argument that passing for true is not the same as being true. I cannot see how Allen can have such a realist flavored cake and eat it for his pragmatist breakfast.

Allen responded to my argument by saying that although passing-for-true is not the same as being true, this does *not* prove that there can be truth apart from passing, or that passing (exchange, circulation, discourse, etc.) alone is not all that is required for there to be a difference between true and false claims.[19] He maintains that the mere logical difference between "true" and "passes" does not establish the ontological thesis that there is more to the existence of truth than the economy in which claims circulate.

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[16] See *ibid.*, p. 5, p. 142, and p. 163.
[17] *Ibid.*, p. 69 and p. 164.
[18] *Ibid.*, p. 142, my emphasis.
[19] Private communication, November 4, 1999.

My objection to Allen's position nonetheless stands: what makes (strong) truth different from (strong) falsity is not the fact that the former gets circulated around and the latter does not, but rather that a (strongly) true proposition is made so by virtue of the presence of a state of affairs that can be framed and recognized as such by the practitioners of a particular communal discourse. Mere circulation or agreement determines the weak truth; it normally does not and cannot affect the (strong) truth associated with a proposition. Moreover, Allen seems to confuse "truth's objectivity" with "truth's ontological status." Nothing in my treatment attributes any sort of ontological significance to truth. Let me briefly note here that B. Bolzano (1781-1848) was probably the first to argue explicitly against the idea of some ontological status that may be attributed to propositional truths. He thought that the ultimate or principal justification for introducing concepts like proposition and truth into discourse is simply that they prove to be *useful* with regard to our scientific and everyday discourse.[20] Yet, once they are (borrowing Allen's favorite term) "in currency," any given proposition is either true or false even if no agent knows it *and* even though propositions and truths have no existence, being, or reality.[21] In a similar vein, the realist claim I wish to endorse is not that "there is more to the existence of truth than mere circulation" but that "there is more to the objectivity of truth (or truth value) than circulation among people."

10.5. In Defense of "AR cum *anti-ER"*

I will make several remarks before closing my discussion. First, in my characterization empirical knowledge is a matter of degree. This is because even though a proposition is presumably either true or false, knowledge is a function of epistemic justification which is certainly quantitative (as suggested by the common use of expressions like 'well-justified,' 'supported by poor evidence' etc.). Therefore two different cognizers who justifiably believe in an allegedly true statement might know it in differing degrees. Typical examples of "lesser knowledge" are those propositions learned at elementary school which are, despite being allegedly true, based upon the child's relatively simple epistemic background.

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[20] Bolzano 1972, p. xxxi, p. 23.
[21] *Ibid.*, p. 21, p. 32.

Second, it is possible to know an apparent falsehood, depending on the *context*. For instance, when I say: "The room temperature is 22°C now" I am clearly not uttering the truth, because if the precision of my device which gave me this piece of information were much better I would read, say, 22.47°C. In spite of the lack of truth in this example we cannot deny the presence of *some* knowledge here. There is an epistemic value associated with this kind of knowledge which is attained by *approximating* to the truth—granting that it is T_s that we strive to arrive at. Especially in those cases where our statements involve quantitative determinations, the degree of our knowledge can be regarded as proportional to how close we are to the alleged truth. If a scientist obtains an inaccurate value for a particular parameter during an experiment, we must refrain from the claim that she simply does not know the indicated value in the same sense an ignorant layman does not know it. Moreover, if T_s is not a condition of K_w but rather an object of desire, imperfect attempts at T_s (retaining, of course, the justificatory aspect) must be permitted in our epistemic picture.

Third, it seems to me that the predicament ER is involved in is mainly due to its assigning T_s to realization of two distinct epistemological functions or tasks simultaneously: truth is expected to be both the *ultimate goal* of epistemic actions and a *precondition* of propositional knowledge. I contend that nonepistemic truth as an ultimate epistemological goal is reasonable—even though it seems empirically impossible to know that we have achieved it, hence our epistemic blindness. But we cannot require that such (AR-ly) truth be a prerequisite of knowledge. Yet, to reiterate one of our intuitively appealing ideas, most of our T_w's must also be T_s's. Nonetheless, the classical tripartite definition of propositional knowledge can be made reasonable only by replacing 'true' with 'T_w'. What we obtain in this way, K_w, is the only sort of knowledge that might be of interest to us. As far as *the actual epistemic practice* of finite subjects is concerned, strong knowledge is a mere chimera. Human knowledge, understood in the ordinary sense, is conditional on T_w, never on T_s. However, I have insisted that the former is *not* all that there is about *truth*; in fact, it is the latter which defines and determines, in the semantic-ontological sense of the term, the "essence" of being true. In a nutshell, T_s is what we hope to "stumble upon" in our doxastic actions.

Fourth, the fact that I deny that T_s can be a condition of K_w does *not* by itself put me at odds with realistic goals about T_s. Epistemic endeavor is distinguished from other sorts of activities in that the cognizer permanently directs himself towards what makes a proposition true. It must be emphasized that my idea that knowledge is possible even by way of apparent falsity does not mean that I have some other epistemic *telos* apart from T_s. There is one epistemological end, and that is getting a correct description or explanation of our world. My point is that T_s is an ideal condition, and knowledge of its satisfaction cannot *im*-mediately and unproblematically be available to human cognizers. Yet, despite its being too ideal to be a condition of actual knowledge, it has long been prescribed *incognito* by a considerable number of philosophers for the actual doxastic activity.

Fifth, according to my account K_w is *not* identical to "justified belief." An epistemic subject *S* may be justified (internalistically or externalistically) in believing that p and, yet, p may not turn out to be T_w. That is, *S*'s belief that p may be result of a sufficiently reliable process or method, and *S* may also have cognitive access to what justifies her belief that p. Still, it is quite possible that the content of *S*'s relevant epistemic state may be rather different from what is available epistemically to the members of *S*'s linguistic community.

Sixth, our allowing T_w in our doxastic actions does not immediately lead to our condoning of arbitrary epistemic states. One may think that if my proposal is adopted, epistemic criteria of adequacy lose entirely their "objective" standard and cannot but lead to total subjectivity. This, however, is not necessarily the case. An epistemic system which *actually* and *continuously* runs the risk of confronting its truth bearers (e.g., beliefs) with the world cannot, generally speaking, keep going based upon arbitrary grounds instead of truth-conducive ones. If MR and AR are admitted to provide some "objectivity" with respect to knowledge and, further, if a belief system actually and permanently takes the risk of disconfirmation, this intelligibly secures the system against losing track of what makes its statements true.[22] And, of course, from a pragmatic or Davidsonian perspective, actual human agents who are able to act and communicate successfully in the world cannot normally have doxastic systems which comprise mostly false beliefs.

Lastly, my way of conceiving the matter rests upon the tacit assumption that reality is what directs, motivates, shapes, and guides our epistemic actions. Certainly, if we as human beings could have direct and undistorted access to the truth of our statements and if we could also (strongly) know each time that such access is taking place, we would never be entangled in tedious and fallible processes like epistemic justification. To put it differently, my denial of K_s basically derives from a recognition of some "epistemological helplessness" rather than free choice. None of us, I believe, would extravagantly reject justified beliefs which, wonderfully, are (strongly) true, if we ever had a choice. However, in actuality we always, so far as we can tell, have to get along without supernatural epistemic means. McDowell's idea that at least in certain cases we must be experiencing satisfaction of propositional truth rather than mere appearance has limited usage as can be seen from the following moral analogy. Consider a theory according to which agents' actions are morally justified if they match God's will (or when they are approved by God). We can assume that in at least some cases such correspondence or fitting must be taking place between what we do and what God wants us to. But the instances of fitting of this kind could arguably be ascertained or known only by God, not by human agents. So it makes little philosophical sense to impose upon human agents such an external requirement as a necessary condition of moral justification. Similarly, I cannot see the point of making nonepistemic truth a logical part of the analysis of ordinary propositional knowledge. Recalling my interpretation of Tweedale's analogy in Chapter Six, reality can only provide us with certain Situations; it hardly waves us flags signaling that we have hit on a truth in particular cases. Regrettably, "weak knowledge" is, in a way, our epistemological fate.

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[22] Notice that "not losing track" *does not* entail the BonJourian idea that coherentist justification and truth are inherently linked. What I state here is a much weaker notion; that is, even though we will presumably not succeed in (blindly) catching each and every T_s in the long run, it seems reasonable to argue, from our practical success and with Almeder, that most of our beliefs (or other truth bearers) are and will be true.

10.6. Concluding Remarks on Alethic Actualism

Let me mention what seems to me a salient merit of the anti-ERist side of my account in comparison to more "analytical" ones which fail to recognize that there is a "weaker" notion of propositional truth. The use of T_w at various levels of knowledge makes an epistemic account, I think, more amenable and intelligible to scientific scrutinies such as those of empirical psychologists. If we can spell out some conception of truth and knowledge that are publicly and/or cognitively available both to the subjects and the scientists, we arguably make a greater service to interdisciplinary research. These "homely" conceptions, alas, do not exhaust the entire repertoire of our epistemic/semantic enterprise. To put it differently, the epistemologist still needs to dwell upon the mysteries of our doxastic and semantic notions (and their interrelation), to strive to give an account touching upon the broader philosophical implications of his theoretical position, and reveal the underlying assumptions of philosophical and scientific theories. In the preceding pages I have gestured towards a rather Kantian conception of human knowledge, and critiqued certain views about first- and higher-level knowledge from that perspective. (More than that, since I am in fact fairly reluctant, *contra* Rorty and Quine, to allow my readiness for collaboration with scientific communities to give rise to an oblivion to the critical (or "transcendental") task of epistemology, this study is frankly Kantian in a general philosophical sense also.)

I believe that propositional knowledge is *aimed at* having some cognitive access to truth (of truth bearers) although it is ultimately *not conditional upon* the possession of this ideal position. I am quite conscious that the epistemic gap thus revealed in my "quasi-realist" account might appear as an invitation to skepticism. My rejoinder, for one thing, is that driving any sort or degree of skeptical attitude out of philosophy is clearly against the critical character of philosophical endeavor. It must be borne in mind that skepticism in an appropriate dosage is a good antidote against dogmatism. Besides, I do not think that my account leads directly to a colossal and all-encompassing skepticism (as in the case of full-time working mischievous demons or scientific vats), though it surely sanctions fallibilism at the level of certain classes of individual knowledge claims.

Although I proclaim K_w to be the only operationally useful kind of knowledge for human agents, I have resisted the anti-ARist tendency to get rid of T_s altogether. In making the former statement, I am not suggesting that we can never know strongly, but only reminding that there is a serious epistemic problem about ascertaining such occurrences when they really take place. As for the latter statement, the main reason for my resistance is that, from the quasi-realist perspective I have developed, it is one thing to point to the pragmatic aspect of our connection with truth, yet another to define it from an entirely pragmatic perspective. Consequently, I believe that the anti-ARist has only a partial truth. My conviction is that *both* anti-AR which is generally at pains to eschew truth *and* ER which holds T_s as an unqualified and panepistemic condition of empirical knowledge essentially strive to "dress up," so to speak, human knowledge in unfitting theoretical clothes. The realization that these attempts are bound to fail is perhaps the road to a more "useful" conception of pragmatism and a more "realistic" conception of realism.

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